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HISTORY  
OF THE  
CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE  
OF  
FRANCE UNDER NAPOLEON.

FORMING A SEQUEL TO  
"THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION."

BY  
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&c. &c. &c.

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## BOOK XLI.

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### THE COUNCIL.

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BOOK XLI.

THE COUNCIL.

IN the midst of the diverse and complicated events of which the recital has been submitted to the reader's perusal, Napoleon had beheld the realization of that which was the chief of all his wishes ; for he had obtained from Providence a lineal heir, a son, whom France had hoped for, and whom for his own part, with perfect confidence in his fortune, he had never ceased to expect.

On the 19th of March 1811, towards nine o'clock in the evening, the Empress Marie-Louise experienced the first pangs of child-birth. The skilful accoucheur, Dubois, was immediately present, followed by the great physician of that period, M. Corvisart. Although the young mother was perfectly formed, the circumstances preceding the delivery were not of a perfectly satisfactory nature, and M. Dubois could not refrain from experiencing some anxiety as he

reflected on the responsibility which had fallen upon him. Napoleon perceiving with his usual penetration, that the operator's nervousness might be the source of some danger to the mother and the infant, took pains to render lighter his sense of the responsibility upon him.

"Imagine," he said to him, "that you are attending the accouchment of a sales-woman of the rue Saint-Denis; you can do no more than if the case were really so; and in any event let your chief care be to save the mother." He charged M. Corvisart not to quit M. Dubois, and for his own part never ceased to lavish the most tender attentions upon the young Empress, and by the most affectionate language to aid her to support her sufferings. At length on the morning of the next day, the 20th March, this child, to whom so high a destiny appeared to be promised, and who in reality found only exile and death in the flower of his age, was born without any of those accidents which had been feared. Napoleon received him in his arms with joy, with tenderness, and when he knew that it was a male infant, a glow of pride beamed from his countenance, as though this important circumstance were a new and remarkable mark of the special protection of Providence. He presented the new born child to his family, to his court, and gave it into the charge of Madame de Montesquiou, who had been appointed gouvernante of the children of France. The cannon of the Invalides announced to the capital the birth of a child born to an inheritance extending over the greater part of Europe.

The populace felt almost as great exultation as in the most prosperous periods of the reign, and in spite of much cause for anxiety, was delighted at finding a pledge given by Providence for the continuance of the Neapolitan dynasty.

In accordance with the decree which had made Rome the second city of the Empire, and in imitation of those Germanic usages, by which the Prince, who was heir apparent to the throne, received the title of King of Rome, this title was bestowed on the new born Prince, and his baptism, which was to be performed with as much pomp as solemnity, was fixed to take place in the month of June.

Singular mockery of fortune! This heir, so much desired, received with such rejoicings, and born to perpetuate the Empire, arrived at the moment when this colossal empire, secretly undermined in every direction, was approaching the close of its duration. Few minds as yet had observed the deep lying causes of its approaching ruin, but secret apprehension had seized upon the masses of the population, and the feeling of security had left them, whilst the sentiment of submission remained unabated, The rumour of a great war

in the North, a war which every one instinctively dreaded, especially as that of Spain was not yet concluded, had spread far and wide, and caused universal disquietude. The conscription, the result of this new war, was enforced with extreme rigour; at the same time a violent crisis overwhelmed both commerce and industry, and finally, the ecclesiastical quarrel increased in bitterness, and gave rise to the dread of a general schism. Such were the various causes which mingled grave anxiety with the joy inspired by the birth of the King of Rome.

Napoleon had suddenly changed his precautionary measures into preparations, which seemed to imply that the war would commence in the summer or autumn of the current year 1811. Indeed Russia, which had hitherto confined itself to the construction of some works on the banks of the Dwina and the Dnieper, and to some movements of the troops of Finland in Lithuania, and for which it was easy to give species excuses although it was impossible to conceal them, having received information from every quarter of the extent and rapidity of Napoleon's preparations, had at length decided on the serious measure of marching its armies on the Danube, a measure which would render doubtful the much longed for conquest of Wallachia and Moldavia. The news of this retrograde movement produced the most lively impression on Napoleon's mind; for in place of regarding it as a result of the fear which he had inspired, he believed that he had discovered in it a proof that the designs of Russia were not defensive but aggressive. This was an error; but, accustomed to the hatred of Europe and the perfidious conduct which was frequently its result, he imagined that there was a secret agreement between Russia and his enemies, open or concealed; and he considered that he ought to prepare for the commencement of the war in the July or August of the current year.

He had already resolved to march the fourth battalions upon the Elbe, and now determined to send them forward immediately, and to form a sixth battalion in those regiments, (the fifth remaining that of the *dépôt*) which would permit of their furnishing five battalions for effective service.

He hoped thus to raise Marshal Davoust's corps to five French divisions, without taking into account a sixth division which would be Polish, and would be formed of the troops of Dantzic. He had horses collected from Germany, preferring to exhaust this country rather than France; drew the cuirasseurs, the chasseurs, and the hussars, whom he intended to send to Russia from their cantonments, and ordered the colonels to prepare to place their regiments on

a war footing. Supposing that he had not time to raise to five or even to four battalions the corps of the Rhine, which was composed of the ancient divisions which had served under Lannes and Masséna, and was spread over Holland and Belgium, he had select battalions formed of the best soldiers of each of its regiments. He gave similar orders with respect to the army of Italy; ordered the assembling and equipment on a war footing of those corps of the old and young guard which were not in Spain, wrote to all the Princes of the German confederation to demand their contingents; and thus placed himself in a position to be able to send forward on their march 167,000 excellent infantry, 39 or 40,000 of the finest cavalry, and 24,000 artillery serving 800 pieces of cannon, independently of 100,000 Poles, Saxons, Bavarians, Wurtembergians, Badians, and Westphalians.

Napoleon recalled Marshal Ney from Spain, wishing to confide to him the command of a portion of the troops assembled on the Rhine. He intended to place the surplus under Marshal Oudinot. He also recalled from Spain Marshal Montbrun, who by his conduct at Fuentes d'Onoro, and on many other occasions, had distinguished himself as one of the first cavalry officers of the period.

Fearing a sudden invasion by the Russians of the Duchy of Warsaw, Napoleon had instructed the King of Saxony and Prince Poniatowski, the Lieutenant of the King of Saxony in Poland, to transport all the artillery, all the ammunition, and all the equipments, of the weaker ill defended places, into the fortresses of the Vistula, such as Modlin, Thorn, and Dantzic. He recommended the King of Saxony to hold the Saxon troops in readiness in order to be able to march them rapidly upon the Vistula, by the side of those of Prince Poniatowski. Both were to be under the command of Marshal Davoust, who was ordered at the first signs of danger to hasten upon the Vistula with 150,000 men, of whom 100,000 French were to take up a position from Dantzic to Thorn, and 50,000 Saxons and Poles from Thorn to Warsaw. By means of such precautions it would be easy to reply to all offensive movements on the part of the Russians, and even to prevent them.

In order to fill up the ranks of his armies Napoleon had been compelled to hasten the levy of the conscription of 1811. But he had not confined himself to this measure; for he desired to recover the arrears of the previous conscriptions, which consisted of about 60,000 refractory persons who had never joined. The conscription had not then become naturalized to the national manners, as it has since become,



and the sad fate of those that were drawn, and who went to Spain to perish, whilst still mere youths, rather of famine than the sword, had not tended to dispose the population to submit to it. In certain provinces, and especially in those of the west, the centre, and the south, where courage was not wanting, but submission to the central authority was by no means firmly established, the conscription was resisted; many of those who were drawn in these parts declined to yield to the summons of the law, or if they did, subsequently deserted, and betaking themselves to the woods and to the mountains, and being favoured by the people, sometimes even made war on the *gensd'armes*. It was this kind of men who furnished in La Vendée the troops of the Royalist insurrection. Naturally brave, they had also derived courage from having been many years in a state of insubordination. 20 or 24,000 of these men had been recovered either by means of capture, or offers of pardon; but about 60,000 still remained at large throughout the various provinces of France.

When Napoleon had an end in view he seldom failed to find means for its accomplishment, and he now formed ten or a dozen columns mobile, which, under zealous commanders, and accompanied by bodies of *gensd'armes* as guides, were to undertake an active pursuit of the refractory recruits. These columns were authorised to place under martial law the provinces they should traverse, and to place soldiers in those households where the sons had failed to obey the conscription. When we remember that these soldiers regarded the refusal of military service as in the highest degree shameful and criminal, and had been in the habit of living in conquered countries, we may readily conceive that they might commit many excesses, although they were now in their own country, and that their conduct, added to the distress arising from the conscription of 1811, would drive the provinces exposed to it almost to despair.

The prefects, whose duty it was to give the sentiments of the population a direction favourable to the government, were alarmed and almost distracted at this measure. Nevertheless, some of them, wishing to make their zeal equal to what they had to perform, rendered the execution of the orders they received severer than the orders themselves. Others, on the contrary, and amongst them M. Lezay-Marnezia in the Bas-Rhin, had the courage to resist as far as possible, the general who had the command of columns in his department, and to write to the Minister of Police the most energetic letters, intended to be submitted to the perusal of Napoleon himself. But the larger number of these officials,



although secretly grieved at them, preferred to execute the orders they received rather than resign their office.

If the rural populations had their griefs, so had those of the towns theirs; these latter arising from a serious industrial and commercial crisis. We have already related the ingenious and yet violent measures devised by Napoleon for the exclusion of British commerce from the continent, except on payment of a ruinous duty, to the profit of the Imperial treasury. These measures had obtained, if not all the success which had been anticipated, at least all that could have been reasonably expected, since the conditions necessary to their success were opposed to the interests, the tastes, and the inclinations not only of one people, but of the whole world. With the exception of some contraband traffic carried on by the Swedes, who conveyed clandestinely the colonial merchandise of Gottenbourg to Stralsund; with the exception of some permitted into Old-Prussia, as much from negligence as bad faith; and with the exception of a certain amount which was still carried on in Russia under the American flag; there was no outlet for the disastrous accumulation which had taken place in London, of colonial merchandise. The manufacturers of Manchester, of Birmingham, and of all the manufacturing towns of England, overleaping as usual the end aimed at by their greedy desire for gain, had produced three or four times as much merchandise as the colonies of all the nations of the world could possibly have consumed. The vessels sent from Liverpool had been compelled to bring back a portion of their cargoes; and those few which had been able to part with their cargoes, had received in exchange colonial produce, which had become so depreciated in price, that the cost of warehousing it exceeded its value. In 1811 the distress had become so great that the British Parliament, fearing a general bankruptcy, had voted an aid to commerce of six million sterling to be distributed in loans to those manufacturers and merchants who were the most embarrassed. Such a condition of affairs, already endured for a considerable time, must inevitably have led to a commercial and financial catastrophe, or to a tendency to peace too strong for the government to resist.

But there is no species of combat whatever be the weapons employed, by which one is able to injure without receiving injury in return. Napoleon had not been able to keep back in England such quantities of products which were either agreeable, or useful, or necessary, to the populations of the continent, without causing considerable perturbation; and he had excited in France, and the neighbouring countries, a commercial and industrial crisis which was as violent as

that which afflicted England, although happily of shorter duration.

Cotton tissues having to a great extent superseded those of linen, especially since they had been produced by machinery, had become the largest branch of industry in Europe. The French manufacturers having to supply old and new France and the whole of the Continent, had proportioned their enterprise to the extent of the demand which they expected. They had speculated immoderately on the supposition that the exclusive supply of the continent would be in their hands, as the English had upon that of the English, French, Dutch, and Spanish colonies. Other branches of manufacture had received an extension as vast and as rapid as that of cotton, and had as immoderately multiplied their produce.

Nor had the ardour of the moment directed itself only to the manufacture of the various products, but also to the introduction of the original materials of which they were composed. The speculators, to whom the funds, on account of their almost constant uniformity offered but little temptation, traded with eagerness in sugar, coffee, cotton, and indigo; they hurried to Antwerp, Mayence, Frankfort, and Milan, where the government sold the merchandise which was brought back by the artillery waggons which had conveyed shot and shell to the banks of the Elb; and on the basis of these rash speculations raised up brilliant fortunes, which by turns appeared and disappeared in the sight of the astonished and envious populace.

In the midst of this commercial agitation prudence had, of course, been the virtue least observed. Whilst industry produced much which it could not sell, the speculators in raw material endeavoured to purchase far larger quantities of it than the industry of the country could employ, and the inevitable consequence of this was, that its price rose to an immoderate height. To pay for these imprudent purchases there were created artificial methods of obtaining credit. Thus, a house in Paris which dealt in timber and colonial produce drew to the extent of fifteen hundred thousand francs a month on a house in Amsterdam; this drew upon others, and these last in their turn drawing upon Paris, there was created a fictitious method of supply, which in the language of commerce is known as *papier de circulation*. The police, observing everything but not comprehending everything, fancied that they had discovered in this commercial artifice a conspiracy which they hastened to denounce to the Emperor, who was soon satisfied of its real nature by the Minister of Finance.

As little reserve was displayed in the enjoyment of the profits obtained by these means as in the means themselves. The newly acquired fortunes were lavishly expended in the purchase of those estates and chateaux of the ancient noblesse which had come into the possession of the state under the title of national property ; and there were in Paris manufacturers who had honorably acquired wealth by their exertions, and speculators in colonial produce whose money was less honorably gained, who were possessed of the noblest domains in the country.

This proneness to speculation had been in existence many years, had been checked for an instant in 1809 in consequence of the Austrian war, had been resumed after the peace of Vienna, had been immoderately developed during the course of the year 1810, and had finally led, at the commencement of the year 1811 to the inevitable catastrophe which always follows such industrial and commercial excesses.

The failure of a great commercial house of Lubeck gave the signal for a succession of bankruptcies. The oldest and most respectable of the houses at Amsterdam, which had been induced by the temptation of large commissions to lend its credit to the rashest merchants of Paris, failed almost immediately after the Lubeck house. The Parisian houses, which had existed solely on the resources they had drawn from this Dutch house, perceived that the artificial nature of their existence must now be discovered, and with great clamour implored the succour of the government. Napoleon, who perceived although he did not avow the share which he had in this crisis, and who was unwilling that the celebration, which was about to take place, of the birth of the heir to his throne, should be attended by sad incidents, hastened to announce that he would afford aid to the embarrassed houses ; and he desired, very properly, to render this aid efficacious by bestowing it speedily and quietly. Unfortunately, the personal opinions of his Minister of the Treasury, and the strange vanity of one of the houses which had been assisted, prevented the exact fulfilment of his intentions. M. Mollien held theoretical objections to the principle of affording aid to commerce. Napoleon disregarded his objections, and ordered him to grant assistance to a certain number of houses. But the minister consoled himself for his defeat by disputing with these houses either the value of the securities which they offered, or the possibility of saving them. This was the cause of the loss of a great deal of time. Besides this, one of the assisted houses made open mention of what the government had done for it. In this way were lost all the



advantages which would have resulted from speedy and secret aid. It became known that there was a crisis, and there took place the usual panic. Napoleon refused, as usual, to be intimidated by the difficulty, and openly assisted the chief of the embarrassed houses, in spite of all the objections of his Minister of the Treasury; but he had not the satisfaction of saving more than a very small portion of those merchants and manufacturers in whom he had interested himself.

The houses which had speculated in sugars, coffees, cotton, and timbers, were the first to fall. After these came those who had not speculated in the raw material, but who had manufactured cotton fabrics to an extent which had exceeded the demand, and had lived on the credit granted to them by certain bankers. When this credit failed they speedily succumbed. The ruin of the producers of cotton tissues was succeeded by that of the manufacturers of cloths, to whom the exclusion of French cloths from Russia had been a serious blow. The refiners who had speculated in sugars, and the leather sellers who had speculated in the leathers introduced by means of licences, felt the shock of the crisis in all its severity. Finally, the silk manufacturers, who had produced large quantities of fabrics, but who had not been so rash as other manufacturers, because their branch of industry was old and well established, and less affected by novelty and the exaggeration of profits, received a sensible blow from the last commercial regulations of Russia and by the ruin of the Hamburg houses, which, in the absence of the Americans, served as the means of export for the products of Lyons.

Large bodies of workmen soon found themselves deprived of employment in Brittany, Normandy, Picardy, Flanders, Lyons, Forey, *le comtat* Vendissin, and Languedoc. Napoleon, much grieved at these accumulated distresses, and more especially at the sufferings endured by the people, and fearing the effect they might have during the fêtes he was preparing in celebration of the birth of his son, was anxious to alleviate them at any cost. He held council after council, and learned too late that there are troubles against which a man's genius and determination, however exalted, can avail nothing. It was not his system of exclusion with respect to the English which had been the cause of the evil; but his complicated combinations had induced to foolish speculations in raw material; the usurpation of the sovereignty of Hamburg had precipitated the ruin of houses which were indispensable to the vast system of continental credit at this period; large government sales had hastened the crisis, and the aid he had afforded to commerce had, by reason of the personal opinions of the Minister of the Treasury, been



granted too slowly and too grudgingly. Finally, his famous tariff of fifty per cent. had prolonged the evil, for the manufacturers who had begun to get rid of their fabrics, and who had desired to reopen their works, had not ventured to do so on account of the high price to which the elevation of the duties raised the raw material.

Rejecting the theories of M. Mallien, and holding frequent councils with the Ministers of the Interior and Finance, with the Director General of Customs, and many distinguished manufacturers and merchants, such as MM. Tourneaux and Hottinguer, Napoleon devised a plan which had some beneficial effects ; this was to purchase goods secretly, and at his own expense, but apparently on account of the great banking houses, so as to lead the public to suppose that the sale was natural. This kind of aid could not change the real state of affairs, but it was not without influence, especially at Rouen, where the sales were believed to be genuine, and regarded as the commencement of a commercial movement !

This state of affairs, however, painful as it might be, was in many respects advantageous as compared with that which existed at the same time in England ; for the lapse of time must ameliorate the position of commerce in France by clearing off the superabundance of manufactured goods, and attracting the Americans, who had already begun to replace in our markets the Dutch and the Russians, and to bring us the cotton which was so essential to our industrial activity. The situation of the English, on the other hand, if their commerce still continued to be blockaded, and they gained no ally on the continent, would speedily become intolerable.

The situation of French commerce and industry was, nevertheless, for the moment, extremely critical. Napoleon received deputations from the Chambers of Commerce, and in his original language, as familiar as vigorous, addressed to them a discourse, of which he desired the substance and chief expressions to be promulgated as widely as possible, and which was somewhat to the following effect :—“ My ears are open to all that is said in your houses of business, and to the kind of conversation you hold in the bosom of your families and among yourselves on my policy, my laws, and myself. ‘ He only understands warfare,’ you frequently say ; ‘ he knows nothing of commerce, and he has no one about him capable of instructing his ignorance ; his measures are extravagant and have been the cause of our ruin.’ But the truth is that you who say these things are ignorant of the principles of commerce and industry. The cause of your present ruin is not I but your own conduct. You have indulged in the belief that fortune in commerce is to be gained

in a single day, as a campaign is sometimes decided by a battle. But it is, in fact, by life long labour, by prudent conduct, and by adding the accumulations of economy to the products of toil, that riches ought alone to be expected. Some of you have speculated in the sudden variations of the price of raw material, and have frequently been deceived; instead of making their fortunes they have made those of others. Others have manufactured to an extent far exceeding the demand, and have lost when they might have gained. Is it my fault if greediness has deprived you of prudence? But errors may be atoned for by patience, and that which is lost may be recovered by more prudent proceedings. You have committed faults this year, you will be wiser and more fortunate next year. As for my measures, how can you tell whether they be bad or good? Shut up in your work-rooms, and ignorant of everything which does not relate to silk or cotton, iron, wood, or leather, having no general view of the whole industrial system, ignorant of the vast relations existing between state and state, how are you capable of judging of the means which I employ against England? Enquire, however, of those among you who have gone furtively to London for contraband purposes, respecting what they have seen there. I know what they say as well as I know what you say, for I am thoroughly informed of all that you utter, and all that you do. They have returned astonished at the distress endured by England, at the overcrowded state of their magazines, at the continued depression of its exchange, at the ruin of its commerce, and have said on their return, of me and my measures, 'this devil of a man is right after all.' Well! I *am* right, and my plans have reduced England to a desperate position more speedily than I could have hoped. She has saturated with her products the colonies of Spain, her own, and ours, for I do not know how many years. They have not been able to pay her, or when they have paid her it has been in colonial produce, by which that already on her hands has been depreciated in value. On this colonial produce the merchants draw bills, which go to the bank and are there converted into paper money. The government also draws upon the bank for the pay of its armies and navies, and this causes fresh emissions of paper money. How long do you suppose that this state of things can last? And are we in a similar state? No! I have freed you from paper money, I have still 800 millions in gold or silver in my treasury, and you have the whole continent open for the sale of your manufactures. The contest was not on equal terms between England and ourselves. She must sooner or later succumb. There are

some outlets in Sweden, Prussia, and a more distant part of the world, (alluding to Russia) by which English produce finds its way over the continent; but be patient; I shall take proper measures. There are contraband traders; I shall find means of detecting them. Those who escape my custom house officers, shall not escape my soldiers, and I will pursue them to the utmost. Do you understand me?"

Napoleon uttered these words menacingly, and with the utmost excitement of gesture, glance, and accent. He resumed his discourse and said,—“this war with England is long and painful, I know, but what would you that I should do? What measures do you wish me to employ? Since you complain so much that the sea is closed, I presume that you are of opinion that it should be open, that a single power should not rule over it at the expense of all the others? For myself, I am thoroughly determined on this point; I will never abandon the rights of neutrals, I will never submit to the principle that the flag does not cover the merchandise, that the neutral should be compelled to visit England to pay her tribute. Should I be guilty of yielding to such theories you would soon be unable to sail from Rouen or Havre, without a passport from the English. My decrees from Berlin and Milan will be laws of the Empire until England has renounced its foolish pretensions. The Americans ask permission to reappear in our ports, for the purpose of bringing you their cotton and purchasing your silks, which will be to you a source of great relief. I am ready to consent to this, on condition that they enforce on their side the principles which I maintain, and which are also theirs, and the principles of all maritime nations, and that if they should not be able to induce England to respect these principles as regards themselves, they will declare war against her. If they will not consent to this condition I will treat them as English, and close against them my ports. What would you that I should do? Undoubtedly if I had been able to form Admirals as I have formed Generals, we would have beaten the English, and a real peace, not patched up like that of Amiens, and cloaking over a thousand unappeased resentments, a thousand opposite, irreconcilable interests, would have been established. Unhappily I cannot be everywhere. Being unable to vanquish the English on the sea, I conquer them by land and pursue them along the coasts of the old continent. Nevertheless I do not resign all attempts by sea, for our sailors are as brave as theirs, and our naval officers need only practice. My vessels shall again go forth, and if they lose the first battle or the second, they will gain the third or at least the fourth, for there will at length arise a



man who will render our flag victorious, and in the meantime I will hold my sword at the breast of any who may be inclined to aid the English. The contest is long, I grant, but in the meantime you will profit by the development of our industry, by becoming manufacturers and by supplying the continent, in the place of the English, with woven fabrics, cutlery, and cloths. It is after all no slight advantage to have the supply of the continent in our hands. The world is constantly subject to change; there is not a single age which resembles another. To be rich in former times, it was necessary to possess India, America, Saint Domingo. These times are already nearly passed away. We must now be manufacturers, and provide for ourselves that which we formerly sought elsewhere. If I have time you shall manufacture your own colonial produce, sugar, indigo; not that I despise the colonies or maritime enterprise; but manufacturing industry is at least of equal importance, and whilst I am striving for the freedom of the seas, the industry of France develops. Being in this position, therefore, we are able to wait. In the meantime Bordeaux and Hamburg suffer; but they suffer now that they may profit hereafter by the re-establishment of freedom on the seas. It is necessary to know how to suffer for the sake of a great purpose. Your sufferings during this year, however, have not been for any great purpose, but are the result of your own errors. I am better acquainted with your affairs than you are with mine. Act with prudence and moderation, and do not hasten to blame me, for when you do so, it is frequently the case that you ought rather to blame yourselves. Moreover, I watch over your interests, and every alleviation of your condition, it is possible to obtain for you, you receive."

Such was the language by which Napoleon silenced without convincing, although he was right upon almost every point, the commercial men with whom he spoke. But it is a subject of constant wonder, that men who have abundant wisdom to bestow upon others, have very little with which to guide themselves. Napoleon was right to blame the merchants for their rash speculations, but how much would he have been embarrassed, if one of these speculators in sugar or cotton, had demanded of him, a speculator of another sort, whether a contest with England rendered necessary to acquire the crowns of Naples, Spain, and Portugal, and to bestow them upon his brothers; whether the difficulty of establishing his dynasty upon so many thrones, had not singularly increased the difficulty of triumphing over the maritime pretensions of the English; whether, with the Bourbons trembling, and submission at Madrid and Naples, he



could not have obtained from them as much concurrence in his designs as from his half rebellious brothers ; whether the French troops dispersed at Naples, Cadiz, and Lisbon, might not have been better risked between Calais and Lisbon ; whether even allowing these conquests to be necessary, he would not have commenced by driving Lord Wellington into the sea, contenting himself with the blockade as practised by Russia, instead of suddenly leaving the English to be triumphant in the Peninsula, for the purpose of venturing in the north on a new war, the success of which must have been doubtful, under a pretence of enforcing a strict observance of the blockade, which was by no means indispensable ; and whether constant changes of place, inordinate pride and desire to make the whole universe submit to his will, was the sure and direct method of putting an end to the tyrannical ambition of England.

There was no such tardy questioner, and the truth was not spoken. But to leave the truth unspoken is to conceal an evil without checking it ; and its secret ravages are the most dangerous, because they suddenly become apparent when it is too late to remedy them.

Added to the two causes of evil, which we have spoken, and which were the conscription and commercial crisis, was a third, which consisted of the religious troubles which had been recently aggravated by a fresh outburst of Napoleon's violent selfwill.

We have seen above to what point matters had arrived, with the Pope in confinement at Savoy. Napoleon had sent to him the Cardinals Spina and Cassel, for the purpose of obtaining in the first place the canonical institution of the nominated Bishops, which was the chief source of difficulty, and afterwards to sound him with respect to a settlement of all the points in dispute between the Empire and the Papacy. Napoleon was particularly anxious to induce Pius VII. to consent to the abrogation of the temporal power of the holy see, the annexation of Rome to the territory of the Empire, and the establishment of a Papacy dependant on the new Emperors of the west ; the residence of which should be Avignon or Paris, and as much under the authority of the Emperor of the French, as the Russian church was under the authority of the Czars, and Islamism under the authority of the Sultans. Pius VII. had at first received the Cardinals with considerable coldness but he had subsequently displayed a more conciliatory demeanour towards them, and had shown himself not absolutely averse to the canonical institution of the nominated Bishops, but indisposed to grant it immediately in order that he might preserve a means of con-

straining Napoleon to bestow attention on the affairs of the Church. At the same time he appeared determined to reject the material advantages which were offered to him, demanding but two things, the Catacombs as a residence, and some faithful Cardinals as councillors.

Although their journey was without result, the two Cardinals were inclined to think that the Pope was not unreasonable, and that by considerate treatment, and the grant of a Council, he would be induced to resume his pontifical functions without leaving Savoy, being content to live there because he was there, and because being in some sort a prisoner there he would sanction nothing by his submission to it, whilst if he went to Paris or Avignon, and accepted the offers which were made to him, he would be sanctioning the Imperial acts. From the interviews which the Pope had since had with M. de Chabral, the same conclusions might be drawn, and Napoleon sought for some plan of reconciling the inclinations of the Pope with his own views, when various incidents which had suddenly come to pass had hurried him into a state of extraordinary exasperation and the most violent proceedings.

The reader doubtless remembers the expedient which had been devised for the provisional administration of the dioceses to which the prelates had been nominated but not instituted, There were no less than twenty-seven dioceses in this position, and amongst them such sees as Florence, Malines, Paris, &c. The Chapters, some of them voluntarily, and others compulsorily, had conferred the qualification of Vicars Capitular on the nominated bishops, by which means they were enabled to govern as administrators their new dioceses. Cardinal Maury, nominated Archbishop of Paris in the place of Cardinal Fesch, and not yet instituted, administered in this manner the diocese of Paris, but he had much opposition to bear on the part of the Chapter.

Napoleon was like an enraged lion at such new instance of opposition on the part of the clergy, but he allowed such things to occupy his attention but little now, as he looked forward to a general settlement of all ecclesiastical affairs, shortly to take place. But reports reached him from Turin, Florence, and Paris, which suddenly revealed to him a plan devised by priests and bigots to render impossible the provisional administrations devised for the churches. The Pope had secretly written to the various Chapters to engage them not to recognise as Vicars Capitular the nominated but uninstituted bishops. He addressed to the Chapter of Paris a formal prohibition to recognise Cardinal Maury as Vicar Capitular, and had sent a most bitter letter to the Cardinal

himself, reproaching him with his ingratitude towards the Holy See, which, he said, had received him in his exile, and endowed him with many benefices, and especially the bishopric of Motevasione (as though the Cardinal had not done for the church at least as much as the church had done for him), and enjoined him to renounce the administration of the diocese of Paris. By a strange piece of negligence this double missive had been addressed to the Chapter and the Cardinal through the Minister of Worship, together with many other missives relative to matters of detail, which the Pontiff was from time to time desirous of arranging. The minister having opened these letters was extremely surprised at their contents, and being unwilling to say anything respecting them to the Cardinal from a fear of distressing him, sent them to the Emperor, whose irritation may be conceived, when he saw these efforts of the imprisoned Pope to nullify the last means left of administering the vacant dioceses.

At the same moment there arrived from Piedmont and Tuscany information of an exactly similar nature. M. d' Osmond, nominated Archbishop of Florence, and actually on his way to his new diocese, was met at Plaisance by a deputation from the Chapter of Florence charged with a declaration to him that there was already a Vicar Capitular, that it would be impossible to elect another, and that instructions had been received regarding this matter from Savoy, and that it was resolved not to disobey them. This unhappy archbishop, a wise but a timid man, had therefore remained at Plaisance in the most cruel perplexity. The Princess Elisa, Napoleon's sister, who governed her duchy with a happy mixture of gentleness and firmness, had been informed of the circumstance, and having inquired into the whole matter sent an account of it to Napoleon before taking any severe measures. In Piedmont, the nominated Bishop of Asti met with a similar reception; and the Prince Borghèse, Governor of Piedmont, had sent to Paris, as had the Princess Elisa, the particulars of this singular and audacious opposition.

Napoleon now saw that there was a well-combined system of resistance, of which the result must be either to compel him immediately to come to terms with the Pope, or to excite a decided schism. He was informed almost simultaneously, namely, on the 29th, the 30th, and 31st December, 1810, of the facts above related. He determined to put a stop to the propagation of the letters of the Pope, and with this end in view desired to strike with terror all those who had carried them, had received them, or had them in their possession. On the following day, the 1st January, 1811, he was to re-



ceive the homage of the great bodies of the state, especially of the chapter and clergy of Paris. At the head of the chapter of Paris was the Abbé d'Astros, a passionate and imprudent priest, who held, even to fanaticism, all the opinions of that portion of the clergy which was hostile to the Emperor. Napoleon, knowing the kind of man with whom he had to deal, entered into conversation with him, on this occasion, on the most difficult points of the religious disputes, and in such a manner as to provoke on the part of the Abbé some imprudence which might serve to draw out his real opinions. He succeeded perfectly, and after having drawn the Abbé into uttering those expressions he wished, he had the Duke of Rovigo, who was in the palace, summoned to his presence, and said to him, "Either I am much deceived or this Abbé has in his possession letters of the Pope. Detain him before he leaves the Tuilleries, interrogate him, and give orders that his papers be searched, and we shall certainly discover that which we wish to know."

The Duke of Rovigo, who had already acquired all the dexterity necessary to his new functions, on interrogating the Abbé pretended to be acquainted with that of which he was ignorant, and obtained by this means a revelation of that which had taken place. The Abbé d'Astros acknowledged that he had received the two letters from the Pope, the one for the Chapter, the other for the Cardinal, declared, however, that he had not yet propagated them, and, very imprudently, admitted having spoken thereof to his parent, M. Portalis. At the same moment the agents sent to the Abbé's abode had found the Papal letters, and many other missions which revealed full particulars of the scheme which was being inquired into.

When all this was first discovered, Napoleon, who desired to inspire fear, commenced with a first victim, and this victim was M. Portalis, who, equally submissive to the church and Napoleon, had thought it sufficient to say to the Prefect of Police who was his friend, that there was in circulation a letter from the Pope which was much to be regretted, and which was very capable of sowing discord between the Church and the State, and that it would be well to prevent its propagation; and had not thought it necessary to particularize his son, the Abbé d'Astros.

On the 4th of January the Council of State being assembled, and M. Portalis assisting at the sitting, Napoleon commenced by relating all that had passed between the Pope and certain Chapters, and the aim of which was, according to him, to excite subjects against their sovereign; then affecting a tone of extreme grief, he added, that the most painful part



of the circumstance was that amongst the most guilty persons was a man whom he had loaded with benefits, the son of an old minister whom he had much esteemed, a member of his own council then present, M. Portalis. Then, turning abruptly to the person accused, he demanded of him whether he had known of the Pope's letter ; whether, having known of it, and keeping it secret, this were not both treason and black ingratitude. M. Portalis, an eminent magistrate, whose energy was not, unfortunately, equal to his high intelligence, was only able to utter some broken words, and Napoleon, forgetting what was due to a member of his council, to the council, and to himself, addressed him thus :—

“ Go, sir, go ! that I may see you here no more ! ” The Councillor of State treated with this violence, tremblingly arose, and traversing in tears the council chamber, retired almost senseless from the midst of his stupified colleagues.

The secret satisfaction which humanity generally experiences at the sight of any extraordinary disgrace was not the sentiment which was excited on this occasion. Compassion and a sense of wounded dignity were manifested throughout the council by an icy demeanour. There is no power, however great, which can offend with impunity the sentiments of an assembly of men. Napoleon perceiving from the aspect of those around him that he had been injudicious and cruel, experienced a feeling of embarrassment from which he vainly attempted to escape by an affectation of extreme grief which was almost ridiculous. He was permitted to indulge uninterrupted in this senseless display, and the council retired without saying a word.

Napoleon took more efficacious measures than this for the purpose of intimidating the clergy, and checking the ill consequences that might result from the circumstances that had come to light. He had M. d'Astros detained ; arrested or banished from Paris many of the priests composing the conciliabule of which the existence had been discovered ; ordered the Prince Borghèse, and his sister Elisa, to send under arrest the refractory canons of Asti and Florence to Fenestrelle, and to declare to these chapters that if they did not immediately submit and directly confer on the new prelates the quality of Vicars Capitular, their sees would be suppressed, together with the canonries, and that the canons would be confined in the state prisons. The same declaration was addressed to the Chapter of Paris.

These violent measures were followed by others still more grievous. Napoleon ordered the Pope to be separated from all those persons by whom he was surrounded, with the exception of one or two domestics on whom perfect reliance

could be placed ; that he should be deprived of all means of writing, that his papers should be seized and sent to Paris, that his expenses, which had hitherto been on a princely scale, should be reduced to fifteen or twenty thousand francs per annum, and that he should be expressly forbidden either to write or to receive letters. An officer of gendarmerie was to watch him day and night and to observe his least movements. The Prefect, M. de Chabral, was charged to frighten him not only in respect to himself but in respect to all those who had been mixed up in the late proceedings ; and to intimate that by his imprudent conduct he had rendered himself liable to be deposed by a council, and had exposed his accomplices to still severer punishments.

The execution of these furious measures was fortunately entrusted to a man of tact and good sense ! But whilst he executed his orders with all kindness he was compelled to fulfil them ; and the Pope, although at first he testified more annoyance at the measures to which he was subjected than was fit (and we are grieved at having to record the fact, for we are jealous of the dignity of such a victim), soon submitted to them with great patience, saying that he did so not for his own sake but for the sake of those who might become victims of their devotion to the church, and adding, that as for himself he was near the close of his career, and would soon escape from his persecutors by leaving in their hands, instead of a Pope an inanimate corpse.

As for the Chapters of Florence and Asti, they were miserably zealous in their submission ; made their excuses with tears and on their knees, and conferred on M. d'Osmond, for the diocese of Florence, and on M. Dejean for the diocese of d'Asti, almost all the powers not only of an administrator, but even of an instituted prelate. At Paris the completeness of the submission was even more strongly marked. The dioceses of Metz, of Aix, and others, where the same spirit of opposition had been displayed, submitted with equal docility. This was not for the church the age either of martyrdom or genius. Pius VII., notwithstanding some weaknesses, inseparable from his state of suffering, was the only one of its members worthy of the fortunate ages of the Roman church.

Napolcon, being obeyed, grew calm. But he resolved to put an end to this spirit of resistance, and determined to execute an idea which had already frequently offered itself to his mind, and which was that of assembling a council, of which he would be the absolute master, and by means of which he might either induce the Pope to yield, or render his submission unnecessary, by substituting for the authority of the

head of the church the authority of the assembled church. He had already formed an ecclesiastical commission, composed of many prelates and many priests, and he now reconvoed it, and submitted to it all those questions which arose out of the project of a council, such as whether it should be general or provincial, and what forms it should observe. He insisted earnestly on the speedy examination of these questions, as he proposed to assemble the council at the commencement of the month of June, on the very day of the baptism of the King of Rome.

In the meantime Napoleon devoted constant attention to the affairs in the North, and was equally active in his diplomatic and military preparations.

In diplomacy he had made a choice which could not have a happy influence on his destiny, and which was that of the Duke of Bassano for his Minister of Foreign Affairs. Already, as we have seen, he had separated himself from the only two personages who could be perceived across the *auréole* of his glory, MM. Fouché and Talleyrand. As we have before related, he had replaced M. Fouché by the Duke of Rovigo, and had replaced M. de Talleyrand by M. de Champagny, Duke of Cadore, a wise and temperate man, who never opposed Napoleon's wishes, but never aggravated them, and rather softened their execution by the moderation of his character. M. de Cadore made excellent reports, but he spoke little, and Napoleon often complained to Prince Cambacérès that his Minister of Foreign Affairs failed in conversation, and at length yielded to the solicitations of his Secretary of State, M. de Bassano, who ardently desired the position. Napoleon decided upon this choice in April, 1811, a period when the affairs of all Europe were in a most complicated state, and when such a choice might have the most unfortunate consequences.

M. de Bassano had precisely all those qualities in which M. de Cadore was wanting. Exactly to that extent that M. de Cadore was endowed with modesty and timidity, M. de Bassano was endowed with the very opposite characteristics. He was an honest man and devoted to Napoleon, but his devotion was of a species that is fatal to the princes who are its object; he had the taste and the talent for representation, spoke well, and was vain to excess of the reflection of his master's glory. He was exactly fitted to add to Napoleon's defects, if, indeed, any one could add to any quality of Napoleon's. Napoleon's imperious will expressed by the hesitating lips of M. de Cadore lost its violence; and in the sarcastic manner of M. de Talleyrand lost its bitterness; but Napoleon styled this method of transmitting his orders mal-



address in the first case, and treason in the second. He had nothing of this sort to fear on the part of M. de Bassano, and might be quite certain that his imperious will would never be tempered by the prudent reserve of his minister. The proudest of masters was now to have the least modest of ministers, and that too at a period when Europe, driven at bay, required the most skilful management. We must add as an excuse for M. de Bassano that he regarded Napoleon, not only as the greatest of captains but also as the greatest of politicians.

On the 17th of April Napoleon summoned the arch-chancellor Cambacérès, and informing him of the cause of his dissatisfaction with M. de Cadore, stated his intention of replacing him by the Duke of Bassano. The Prince Cambacérès said a few words in favour of M. de Cadore, and was silent respecting M. de Bassano; a silence which Napoleon well understood but of which he took no notice, and having signed the decree he directed the Prince Cambacérès to go with M. de Bassano to demand of M. de Cadore his portfolio. M. de Cadore was extremely surprised at the message, for he was ignorant that he had displeased his master, and he delivered the portfolio, with ill concealed chagrin, to M. de Bassano, who received it with the blind joy of gratified ambition.

Prince Cambacérès had observed the distress of M. de Cadore, and reported it to Napoleon, who, always filled with regret when he found it necessary to afflict his old servants, granted him a fair recompense for the ministry of which he had been deprived, by nominating him Intendant General of the Crown.

Napoleon had been happier in his choice of a new ambassador to St. Petersburg. He had replaced, as we have said above, M. the Duke of Vicenza by M. de Lauriston, one of his aides-de-camps, whom he had already employed with advantage in many delicate missions. M. de Lauriston was a plain, sensible man, who was unwilling to displease his master, but preferred displeasing to deceiving him. No ambassador was more fitted for reconciling the two Emperors of France and Russia, if they could have been reconciled; but there was little chance of his effecting such an object in the situation which affairs had now reached.

Napoleon, whilst he precipitated his warlike preparations, on receiving information of the recall of the Russian regiments from Turkey, perceived that they could no longer be dissimulated, and had ordered M. de Coulaincourt, at the moment of his departure, and M. de Lauriston at the moment of his arrival, to avow all the preparations which had been



made, in such a manner as to intimidate Alexander, since his suspicions could no longer be lulled. But he had, at the same time, authorised them to declare that he was not anxious for war, and only prepared for it because he felt convinced that Russia, as soon as the war with Turkey was concluded, would form an alliance with England; that she had already taken some steps in this direction by receiving the Americans into her ports; that, in his opinion, the reception of contrabandists was almost a declaration of war; that as for so wretched a thing as Oldenburg, an indemnity had but to be demanded of him and it should be given; but that it was necessary that any secret cause of dissatisfaction should be openly expressed in order that arms should at once be taken up or finally laid aside, as it was impossible to submit to the exhaustion of useless preparations. All these things he had said by his own mouth to Prince Kourakin and M. de Czernicheff, with that mixture of grace, hauteur, and bonhomie which he knew so well how to employ to suit his purpose, and he had urged M. de Czernicheff to go to St. Petersburg to repeat them.

But all these precautions were useless, for Alexander had been informed day by day, and with rare exactness, of all that had taken place in France. To every attempt, therefore, made by M. de Coulaincourt to deny or to excuse the facts respecting which information arrived every day at St. Petersburg, Alexander replied, "Do not deny them, for I am certain of the truth of what I assert. It is very evident that you are left in ignorance, and that you are no longer trusted. All the pains that I take to enlighten you and which I willingly take because I esteem and regard you, are thrown away. Napoleon does not trust you because you tell him the truth; he asserts that I have seduced you, that you are mine and not his; it will be the same with M. Lauriston who is also an honest man, for he will only be able to repeat the same things, and your master will say that M. Lauriston has been gained over by the enemy.

M. de Coulaincourt having replied that France was certainly making preparations, but they were only in answer to those made by Russia, and having spoken of the works on the Dwina and the Dnieper, of the movements of the troops of Finland, and of those of the troops of Turkey, Alexander rejoined, "You assert that I am arming, M. de Coulaincourt, and I am far from denying it, I am effectually armed; I am ready, quite ready, and you will find me prepared to defend myself to the utmost. And what would you have thought of me if I had acted otherwise, if I had been so simple, so forgetful of my duty, as to leave my country exposed

to the prompt, exacting, and terrible will of your master? But I have only armed after having received certain information that Dantzic is being placed in a state of defence, that its garrison is being augmented, that the troops of Marshal Davoust are being reinforced and concentrated, that the Poles and Saxons have been ordered to hold themselves in readiness; that Modlin and Thorn have been repaired, and all the fortifications provisioned. This information having reached me see what I have done"—Then conducting M. de Coulaincourt by the hand into a retired cabinet in which were spread open his maps, he added, "I have ordered defensive works, not in advance of, but behind my frontier, on the Dwina and the Dnieper, at Riga, at Dunaburg, at Balernisk, that is to say at a distance from the Niemen, almost as great as that which separates Strasbourg from Paris. If your master should fortify Paris, should I complain of it? And when he carries his preparations so far in advance of my frontiers, should I be accused of provoking war because I arm myself behind mine? I have not drawn whole divisions from Finland, but simply restored to the divisions of Lithuania those regiments which had been taken from them for the war against the Swedes. I have changed the organization of my depôts; I have augmented my guard and am anxious to render it equal to the guard of Napoleon. Finally, I have drawn five divisions from Turkey, of which I am so far from making a mystery, that I make it a subject of accusation against you, for by compelling me to do this you have prevented me from reaping the profit which it was agreed I was to have from our alliance. I have not such good generals as yours, I am not myself so good a general or administrator as Napoleon; but I have good soldiers, and a devoted people, and we will perish sword in hand, rather than permit ourselves to be treated as the Dutch, or the people of Hamburg. At the same time I declare to you upon my honour, that I will not strike the first blow. I will let you pass the Niemen before I pass it myself. Believe me when I say that I do not desire war; and that my nation, although hurt and terrified at your proceedings, does not desire it—but if attacked she will not recede.

M. de Coulaincourt having replied again, that the projected alliance with England after the conquest of the Danubian provinces, and the re-establishment of commercial relations with her, were regarded by Napoleon as no less dangerous than an attack by artillery; Alexander was as prompt in giving explanation on this subject as on the others. "Ally myself with England," he said, "after the conclusion of the war with Turkey! I have never thought of such a

thing. After the conclusion of the war with Turkey ; after having added Finland, Moldavia, Wallachia, to my empire, I shall consider that the military and political tasks of my reign have been accomplished. I shall have no wish to run new hazards, but rather desire to enjoy in repose that which I shall have gained, and to employ myself in the civilisation of my empire rather than its enlargement. Again, to reconcile myself with England, I must alienate myself from France, and thus run the chance of a war with her ; a war which I regard as the most dangerous of all ! And for what end ? To support England, to assist her in the maintenance of her maritime theories which are not mine ? This would be madness on my part. I shall remain faithful to the policy of Tilsit, I shall remain at war with England, and keep my ports closed against her, but in that manner which I have already declared, and from which it is impossible that I should depart. I cannot, I have told you, and I repeat it, interdict all commerce to my subjects, nor prevent them from dealing with the Americans. Some English merchandise thus enters Russia, but you admit at least as much by your tariff which permits its entrance, on the payment of a duty of fifty per cent. It is necessary that, whilst persisting in an alliance which you take no pains to popularise in Russia, I should not render it intolerable to my people by a kind of devotion to it which you do not display in respect to it, and which is not necessary to the reduction of England, since this will speedily take place, if you do not raise up allies for her on the continent. On the other points on which we dispute, I have made my determination. The Poles are very turbulent and openly announce the approaching reconciliation of Poland, but with respect to this subject, I rely on the Emperor's word, although he has refused me the convention which I have demanded. As for Oldenburg, I desire some suitable compensation not for the sake of my family, for I am sufficiently rich to recompense it for this loss, but for the dignity of my crown. And in this matter also I rely on the Emperor Napoleon. I have told you, and repeat it, that although hurt and embarrassed by what has taken place with respect to the Duchy of Oldenburg, I will not make this a reason for war."

Subtle as Alexander was, he manifestly expressed his real sentiments in his discussions with M. de Coulaincourt. He was far from being gratified at Napoleon's greatness, but he resigned himself to it in consideration of obtaining Finland, Moldavia, and Wallachia. He did not wish to become reconciled with England at the risk of a war with France, the very idea of which made him tremble, but nevertheless he was not prepared to sacrifice to her the remainder of his



commerce, and to preserve this alone was he willing to brave a rupture with her. His nation, and by his nation we understand particularly the nobility and the elevated portion of the army, divined and shared his sentiments on all these points; and whilst it knew that a war with France would be sufficiently serious, was prepared to defend its independence. An idea had already spread throughout all ranks of the people that the example of the English in Portugal would be followed, that they would retreat into the depths of Russia, destroy everything as they retreated, and that the French would perish of destitution if not destroyed by the Russian arms. But in language and attitude they showed no disposition to insult or provoke France, and those Frenchmen who were in the country were everywhere received with redoubled politeness.

The news of the birth of the King of Rome having reached St. Petersburg before the arrival of M. de Lauriston, Alexander had sent all the grandees of his court to compliment the Ambassador of France, and behaved in this matter with as much frankness as cordiality. M. de Coulaïncourt desired to terminate his brilliant, and, we must acknowledge, useful embassy, (for he had contributed to the delay of the rupture between the two empires) by a magnificent fête given on the occasion of the birth of the King of Rome. He had naturally desired that the Emperor should be present at it, and the latter, divining his wish, addressed him thus:—"Do not invite me, for I should be obliged to refuse you, not being able to dance with you while two hundred thousand French soldiers are marching towards my frontiers. I shall declare myself ill, to furnish you with a reason for not inviting me, but I will send you all my court, and even my family, for I wish that your fête should be as brilliant as it ought to be, whether we regard the event which it celebrates or you who give it. Your successor arrives, and possibly brings us some reassuring information; and should an understanding be come to between us, I will bestow both on your master and yourself distinguished testimonies of my friendship.

M. de Lauriston, very impatiently expected, at length arrived on the 9th of May, 1811. M. de Coulaïncourt immediately presented him to the Emperor Alexander, who received him very graciously. After some days consecrated to official receptions full of éclat, Alexander put M. de Lauriston to the question, so to speak, in order to obtain some information respecting Napoleon's projects; but he learnt nothing which had not been already told him by M. de Coulaïncourt, or repeated to him by M. de Czernicheff, who had recently arrived from Paris.



After some discussions had taken place between the Emperor and M. de Lauriston similar to those which had so often taken place with M. de Coulaincourt, the Emperor received the adieus of the latter, embraced him, entreated him to make Napoleon acquainted with the whole truth, prayed M. de Lauriston, who was present, to repeat it in his turn, and sadly added these characteristic words: "But you will no longer be believed, M. de Coulaincourt . . . they will say that you have been gained over, that I have seduced you, and that, fallen intomy snares, you have become more Russian than French."

After some days passed in St. Petersburg, M. de Lauriston wrote to the French Minister declaring that as an honest man he was compelled to say that the Emperor Alexander, although to a certain extent prepared, was not desirous of war, and would certainly not take the initiative; that as regarded Oldenburg, he would accept whatever might be given him, even Erfurt, although such an indemnity was ridiculous; and that with respect to the commercial question, more rigour might be obtained in the examination of the papers of neutrals, but that Russia would never consent to all that was demanded in that respect.

M. de Czernicheff was again sent to Paris to repeat in other terms, but with the same affirmations, exactly the same things, and also to continue that corruption of the bureaux of war, to which his government attached so high a value, because it enabled it to obtain the most precise information respecting the French military preparations.

The conclusion arrived at by Napoleon from the new explanations brought by MM. de Czernicheff and de Coulaincourt, and received in the letters of M. de Lauriston, was, not that peace was possible, but that the war might be deferred a year; and as he had determined to conduct this new campaign in the North with immense resources at his command, he was not sorry to have still a year in which to complete his preparations. But why did he not see that it was possible, not only to defer, but even entirely to avoid the contest? Because he had so often found that after a first coldness, a war was, with him, inevitable, and had so often seen his concealed enemies ready to rally round the first open enemy who dared to raise the mask. He had seen so plainly in Russia an enemy, vanquished but not crushed, around whom the resentments of Europe would gather, that he had said that a war with her sooner or later was inevitable; and perceiving in the probable war all the consequences of a war declared, reading profoundly the hearts of others without looking into his own, failing to see that the change from coldness to open quarrel was chiefly caused by his own impetuous character,

failing to see that it would be otherwise if he would himself become moderate, patient, and tolerant towards others ; making no salutary reflexions and having no one about him to compel him to make them, he resolved a second time, we may say, in the May of 1811, to make war with Russia.

He wrote to Marshal Davoust that the matters were less pressing, but that no preparations were to be resigned ; that his intention was to have the army of the North ready for the commencement of 1812, but of more extensive proportions than he had at first determined on. It was no longer of 300,000 men that he thought ; he wished to have 200,000 under Marshal Davoust, on the Vistula, 200,000 others under his own command on the Oder, with a reserve of 150 on the Elbe or on the Rhine, an almost equal force in the interior, for the safety of the Empire, and nevertheless to send troops to Spain, instead of withdrawing them. Napoleon countermanded the departure of the fourth and sixth battalions of Marshal Davoust, decided that they should be formed at the depôt, because they would receive there better organization, and projected the formation of a seventh so as to have six for actual service.

He hastened the formation of battalions d'élite which had been ordered in the regiments stationed in Holland and Italy, and even wished that a fourth and a sixth battalion should be created in each of these regiments. He ordered that a purchase of horses which had been commenced should be enlarged, but made more slowly, in order that its results might be of a better quality ; and made preparations for the construction of an immense baggage train of the largest proportions and on a new plan. He took advantage of the time at his disposal to reorganize and on a larger scale the Polish army, and sent funds to Warsaw for the purpose of having the fortifications of Torgan, Modlin, and Thorn, thoroughly repaired and armed by the following year.

In the conduct of his diplomacy he held the same ends in view. Austria had been sounded and a response had been obtained from her which was of a nature to inspire confidence. M. de Metternich directed the Cabinet of Vienna since the war of 1809. His declared policy was, peace with France, and being ambitious to obtain from this peace some brilliant result for his country, he wished to make it the foundation of a species of alliance, and by means of this alliance to obtain the restoration of Illyria, which was what Austria at this moment regretted the most. It was on this account that the idea of a marriage between Napoleon and Marie-Louise had been received with so much cordiality. But this policy found at Vienna more than one opposer ; being con-

tradicted both by the conduct and the inclinations of the court and the people. But the government had determined on the line of conduct that it would take, and had decided, if it could not remain neutral, to pronounce for the strongest, that is to say, for Napoleon.

In the meantime the Austrian Emperor, leaving his court to act as it chose, and contenting himself with holding aloof from any of its manifestations, wrote the most friendly letters to his daughter, encouraged his minister to treat France with great caution, at once consented to aid her in Turkey, (for he was anxious to prevent Russia from obtaining the Danubian provinces,) and held out hopes that Austria would be an ally, in the event of new European complications, on condition of obtaining some solid advantage.

M. de Metternich entered fully into these views, and was perhaps rather more favourably inclined towards us than the King himself. He said to M. Otto with a singular mixture of *abandon*, cordiality, and confidence in himself—"Leave me to myself, and all will go well. Your master is always anxious to do things too rapidly. At Constantinople you commit great faults. You are too apt to think that the Turks are brutes to be driven with a cudgel. These brutes are become as subtle as yourselves. They perceive the speculations which all the world, and especially you, are indulging in with respect to them. They know that you delivered them up to the Russians in 1807, and that now you wish to take them away again, to make them aid you against these same Russians. They detect you and understand in an opposite sense all that you say to them. Keep in the background, be reserved at Constantinople, and we shall snatch from the hands of the Russians, the rich prey which you have so imprudently resigned to them. Trust in me and the Turks shall lose neither Moldavia nor Wallachia. But show yourselves in the matter as little as possible. All counsel that comes from you is suspected at Constantinople." In speaking on the probability of war with Russia M. de Metternich counselled peace, saying, that great as was the Emperor Napoleon, fortune might betray him, and that although the chances were doubtless in his favor it would be wiser not to tempt her; and that if the Emperor should happily incline to this opinion, he, M. de Metternich, would rejoice to become the mediator between him and Russia, and believed that he would be a successful one; that as for Austria she was worn out, and had great need of repose, and that she could only be induced to afford aid to France, in opposition to the whole spirit of the nation, by a reward that would be worthy of such an effort.

Such language showed that at the price of a province an Austrian army might be obtained as a Russian army had formerly been obtained at the price of Finland. But M. Otto at Vienna, and M. de Bassano at Paris, were directed to be as obscure in their communications as M. de Metternich, to intimate that war was generally fruitful in consequences, that it was impossible to make a distribution of booty beforehand, but that those allies who were really useful to Napoleon had never gone unrewarded.

In Prussia the policy was not so. M. de Hardenberg, the chief Prussian minister, and his colleagues, had devised a plan, since become a permanent one in Prussia, by which Prussia might have many troops whilst appearing to have but few. We must remember that a secret article of the treaty of Tilsit prohibited Prussia from having more than 42,000 men under arms. To evade this article fresh bodies of troops were successively enrolled and drilled, as quickly and well as possible, and then dismissed to their avocations to make room for others. By this means 150,000 were rendered available instead of only 42,000, the number fixed by the treaty. At the same time all the youth of the upper and middle classes, nobles and citizens, priests and philosophers, united themselves into secret societies, which took various names, such as *Ligne de la Vertu*, *Ligne Germanique*, in which vows were taken to be entirely devoted to the cause of Germany, to live but for her, to forget every difference of class or province, to acknowledge only Germans, to speak no language but German, to wear nothing but what was of German manufacture, to cultivate and cherish only German art, and, in short, to devote to Germany every faculty.

Situated on such a volcano the position of the King and of M. de Hardenberg was one of cruel perplexity. Scruples of conscience rendered the former unwilling to break with Napoleon, to whom he was engaged by the most solemn protestation of fidelity, made in the hope of saving the remains of his monarchy; and the latter, in a position similar to that of M. de Metternich, was endeavouring to discover which line of conduct would be most advantageous to his country.

In the meantime the German party was urgent for the adoption of a patriotic perfidy, according to the plan of which Prussia was to arm extensively, under pretext of the threatening appearance of affairs in Europe, to induce Napoleon to consent to this by conferring with him respecting an alliance, to promise and sign anything, and at the last moment to unite with the Russians to overwhelm the French,



whilst the whole of Germany would arise against them in their rear.

The King, M. de Hardenberg, and some of the wiser spirits considered this plan as absurd, and only adopted that portion of it which was free from perfidy. They resolved to arm, and by means of the expedient we have already pointed out, although restricted to 42,000 effective troops, had in a very short time 100 or 120,000. But although they could equivocate respecting the number of their disposable troops, they could not conceal some of their preparations, such as, for example, those that were made in the fortifications which Prussia still retained. The intention of the King and M. de Hardenberg was, when they could no longer keep their preparations secret to acknowledge them, to avow their motive to lie in the project imputed to Napoleon of commencing the Russian war by suppressing the remains of the Prussian monarchy, and to place France in the alternative of either accepting their sincere alliance at the price of a solemn guarantee of their national existence and the restitution of various territories, or of having them bitter enemies, prepared to fight to the last man in defence of their independence.

Matters had now arrived at such a point that it was necessary to speak openly, for dissimulation both on the one side and the other was no longer possible. Napoleon, in fact, had already ordered Marshal Davoust to hold himself in readiness to march the division Friant upon the Oder, in order to cut off the King of Prussia and his army from the Vistula, to seize him and the greater part of his troops at the first hostile movement, and to prepare three parks of artillery which would be capable of taking in a few days Spandau, Graudentz, Colberg, and Breslau. Having given these orders he had directed M. de Saint-Martin, the French ambassador, peremptorily to demand an explanation of the Cabinet of Berlin, to require under the form of an ultimatum an immediate and complete disarming, and, should this ultimatum not be accepted, to withdraw, giving into the hands of Marshal Davoust the monarchy of Frederic the Great.

The state of affairs in Denmark and Sweden were of no less serious an aspect. Denmark, compelled in common with the rest of the European shore to comply with the laws of the continental blockade, was as faithful to those laws as could be expected from a state defending the cause of another; for, although Denmark regarded the cause of the neutrals as her own, in the state which affairs had now reached the cause of the neutrals had unfortunately disappeared in another, that of Napoleon's ambition. Denmark, composed of islands, and having a portion of its fortune in

other isles situated beyond the ocean, could only exist by means of the sea, and considered it hard that, for the purpose of being free at some future time it should be completely deprived of freedom at the present. But the natural probity of the government and the country, the remembrance of the disaster of Copenhagen, the natural hatred to England, and the courage of the reigning prince, all concurred to render Denmark the most faithful ally of France in the great matter of the continental blockade. But although this was the general spirit of the country, the infidelity of some and the sufferings of others prevented it from being universal. Altona, especially, situate at some steps from Hamburg, served as a means for the continuance of communications with England. The merchants of Hamburg, become French in spite of themselves, and as such submitted to the rigorous laws of the blockade, exposed, moreover, to the inflexible severity of Marshal Davoust, and fearing (as sometimes happened) that their books would be examined to discover whether they still maintained commercial relations with England, had made Hamburg the residence of their families, and had kept at Altona their offices, books, and correspondence. By means of smugglers and contrabandists, whose proceedings were much favoured by the form of the country, Holstein was filled with colonial produce, and Napoleon, taking the same measures in regard to it as he had formerly taken with regard to Holland, had attempted to empty this depôt by granting permission for the introduction of this colonial produce into the empire during two months on payment of a duty of fifty per cent. This plan had succeeded, and had produced thirty millions of receipts. Holstein was emptied and was no longer a magazine of English colonial produce. Contraband traffic was, therefore, almost entirely suppressed in this quarter. Denmark had furnished us with more than three thousand excellent soldiers for the Antwerp fleet.

One motive of its fidelity to us was its fear of Sweden; which country having lost Finland rather by the extravagance of her king than the insufficiency of her arms, entertained the culpable idea of recompensing herself for this loss by taking Norway from Denmark. Napoleon had shown himself inflexible upon this point. But to comprehend this other European complication, it is necessary to be acquainted with the circumstances of a new revolution which had taken place some months since in Sweden, the country which, after Florence, has been the most fertile in revolutions.

Wearied of the follies of Gustavus IV. the Swedish people relieved themselves by a military revolution of this mad king, who had since wandered about Europe an object of

general pity, whilst his uncle, the Duke of Sudermaine, reigned at Stockholm as wisely as the difficulties of the times would permit. At his request Napoleon had granted peace to Sweden, on condition that she should immediately declare war with England, close her ports against British commerce, and comply with all the regulations of the continental blockade. Then for the purpose of having peace with Russia and France, Sweden had been compelled to abandon Finland to the first, and to sacrifice her commerce to the second. At this price she had recovered Swedish Pomerania, and her commercial relations with the continent. But of what value to her was permission to introduce merchandise of every kind into continental Europe if she had lost by war with England the ability to receive them?

Sweden had escaped from her embarrassment, as is usual with the weak, by means of deceit. She had only made a fictitious declaration of war against England; had closed against her her ports but left open to her the chief of them, and the most advantageously situated, that of Gothenbourg. This port, situated in the Cattegat, opposite the coasts of Great Britain, at the entrance of a deep gulf, presented infinite conveniences for the strange system of contraband traffic devised at this period. The English fleet, under Admiral Saumarez, was stationed either at the isle of Anholt, or in the various mouths of the gulf. Under the protection of the British flag hundreds of vessels undisguisedly deposited on the coast of Sweden their cargoes of sugars, coffees, cottons, and all the products of Birmingham and Manchester. This merchandise, exchanged for the products of the North, and sometimes also for the silks of Italy, were carried to every part of the Baltic shore under various pretended neutral flags, and especially under that of America. But the principal scene of this commerce on the continent was the port of Stralsund, in Swedish Pomerania. Introduced into this port as Swedish merchandise, English products had free entrance into Germany since the establishment of peace between France and Sweden.

It was thus that Sweden eluded the conditions of its peace with France. But such facts, concealed for a moment, could not long remain hidden from Napoleon. Moreover, a new complication had added to the singularities of this strange state of affairs. The Duke of Sudermaine, uncle of Gustavus IV., had no children. The most simple plan would have been to make the son of the dethroned king heir to the throne. But the party of the deposed monarch had rendered itself so hateful to the nation that it was quite impossible to re-establish the inheritance of the throne in the family of Wasa,



by adopting as its future king the son of Gustavus IV. In this dilemma the new king, Charles XIII., had adopted a Danish prince, the Duke of Augustenbourg, and *beaux frere* of the King of Denmark. The crown of Denmark was itself threatened with a failure of heirs, for the King of Denmark had no offspring. Many sensible persons in Sweden, seeing that both the thrones at Stockholm and Copenhagen would probably soon become vacant, and perceiving the progressive decadence of their country, threatened by Russia by land, and by England by sea, believed that a renewal of the famous reunion of the three kingdoms was the only means of securing their greatness and independence. This was true policy, and pointed to that which the Swedes ought to have desired for themselves and Europe have desired for the Swedes. Unhappily, although a certain national instinct supported this idea, amongst the peasants, who formed the liberal order, the union of Calmar, was associated with only sad remembrances; and their new king, therefore, not daring to adopt the King of Denmark himself, adopted his *beaux-frere*, destined at a later period to ascend the Danish throne.

The Duke of Augustenbourg, thus destined one day to wear the three crowns of the North, was possessed of no pleasing qualities, but of many of a nature to procure esteem. Before he had time, however, to acquire the respect of the Swedish people, he was suddenly carried away from amongst them, suddenly falling dead from his horse at a review. It was fully proved that his death proceeded from natural causes alone, but the Swedish people inspired with a sudden burst of sympathy for a prince so suddenly struck down, persuaded themselves that the criminality of interested parties had snatched away this object of their growing affection. With the usual violence of popular passion, they pointed out as the committers of this crime the chief persons of the party of the deposed King, and hurled against them the most atrocious threats, which were happily without effect, except in the case of the Comte de Fersen whom the populace murdered in the public streets.

In proportion as the aspect of affairs became more grave the enlightened persons of the nation, with Charles XIII. at their head, became the more inclined to the union of the three crowns, and were tempted to take another step in pursuit of this policy, either by adopting the cousin and heir apparent of the King of Denmark, Prince Christian, or by adopting the King of Denmark himself. But in the midst of the conflict of ideas arising from the various proposals, there were some persons, and their number increased every day, who had turned their thoughts in another direction, many Swedes



favourably inclined towards France by their fondness for the French revolutionary ideas, by their military enthusiasm, and by that long existing instinct which always inclined the two countries towards each other, entertained the idea that in the existing state of circumstances the best plan would be to apply to him by whom thrones were raised or overthrown, Napoleon. The feeling respecting him in Sweden was similar to that which had been felt towards him in Spain before the revolution of Bayonne, and was an extraordinary blending of admiration, fascination, and adulation for his talents both military and civil. To address him, therefore, with the purpose of obtaining from him either one of his princes or one of his captains, was an idea even more popular than that of uniting the three Scandinavian kingdoms, and was particularly gratifying to the warlike feelings of the Swedes.

The reigning King, entirely devoted to the policy of the union of the three kingdoms, but perceiving the necessity of having the support of France, had sent a confidential messenger to Napoleon with a letter with which he informed him of the feeling which existed in favour of the union of the three crowns; declared that it was in his opinion the best policy that could be selected, but that he was unwilling to do anything without consulting the arbiter of the destinies of Europe, the powerful Emperor of the French, and if that he approved he would choose his sovereign from amongst the Princes of Denmark, but that if he disapproved, he, the King of Sweden, hoped that he would grant to Sweden, who would accept the gift with transport, either one of the princes of his own family, or one of the illustrious warriors under his command. In addition to this letter the secret envoy was directed to insist that Napoleon should himself bestow a king upon Sweden.

Napoleon was more embarrassed than flattered by this message. He had found that he was compelled to support at a heavy charge the new kings whom he created, and that, in spite of all that they cost him they were little less compliant than those he had deposed, being obliged as they were, to make themselves the instruments of their peoples' resistance. He was not anxious, therefore, to take upon himself new difficulties of this kind. Moreover he had given sufficient umbrage to Europe, by the creation of French departments at Hamburg and Lubeck, without aggravating it by the elevation to the throne of Sweden of a French Prince, who might very probably speedily become an enemy. Napoleon had, therefore, immediately replied that he had no prince or general to offer to the Swedes, and that he had no ambitious projects at that moment either for his own family or for his

lieutenants; that should he comply with the request made Europe might be offended, and that the policy which held in view the ultimate union of the three crowns of the North appeared to him to be the best, and the most worthy of the excellent prince who reigned at Stockholm; that for himself he asked no more than that Sweden should be the faithful ally of France, and aid her against England by an exact compliance with the laws of the continental blockade.

When this answer had arrived Charles XIII. no longer hesitated to follow his own inclinations, and resolved to adopt the brother of the lately deceased prince, the Duke of Augustenbourg. But a new incident had again complicated the circumstances attending this choice. The King of Denmark, Frederic VI., desiring not only the union of the three crowns, but that they should be united on his own head, had prohibited the Duke of Augustenbourg from accepting the adoption with which he was honoured, and had openly, in frank and noble terms, for the sake, he said, of the peoples of the three kingdoms, solicited the adoption of Charles XIII.

The union so boldly presented to their notice, and associated, moreover, with a King of Denmark, whose position offended Swedish pride, whilst his real or supposed character frightened the numerous partisans of the new ideas, had caused a species of agitation, and the confusion in men's minds became greater than ever. In this strange position of affairs, which was prolonged during the whole of the year 1810, public feeling, becoming constantly more fluctuating and more perplexed, had turned once more towards Napoleon, without being able to penetrate his designs, and employed itself in conjecturing what prince or general Napoleon could bestow upon Sweden. There was one man, Marshal Bernadotte, both a warrior and a prince, allied to the Imperial family by means of his wife, sister of the Queen of Spain, who had sojourned for some time on the frontiers of Sweden, and had contracted relations with many Swedes; and having been directed to threaten Sweden with an expedition and to assist the Russians in Finland, and at the same time receiving secret orders not to act, he had permitted the Swedes to believe that his inaction was the result of his own goodwill towards them. Courting on all occasions all those with whom he came in contact, moved by a vague feeling of ambition which led him to watch all the thrones that were vacant or were likely to become so, he had made friends amongst the Swedish nobility whose tastes were military. Knowing both how to flatter others and to set forth his own merits, he had persuaded some persons to regard him as an accomplished prince. The name of old General Bernadotte

was, therefore, mentioned by some persons as that of a man dear to Napoleon, having rendered him immense military services, and who would obtain for Sweden, besides great renown, the thorough friendship of France.

This idea was rapidly propagated, and in the meantime a last incident, as singular as those which had already signalled this singular dynastic revolution, had occurred, and was not of a nature to enlighten the Swedes respecting the wishes or intentions of the French Emperor. Our chargé d'affaires, M. Desangiers, was deprived of his post for having held a conversation with a Swedish personage, from which it might be concluded that France was inclined to the union of the three crowns. This solicitude to disavow an idea, which nevertheless was its own, proved how determined France was not to manifest her opinion. What then did she desire?

In the midst of this cruel state of embarrassment, the King, having to submit a proposal to the *comité* of the assembled states, had presented three candidates; the Duke of Augustenbourg, the King of Denmark, and the Prince of Ponte-Corvo (Bernadotte). The *comité des états*, under the influence of M. d'Adlersparre, the head of the revolutionary and military party that had dethroned Gustavus IV., had adopted, as the wisest and least hazardous resolution, the adoption of the Duke of Augustenbourg, brother of the prince lately deceased. This candidate had eleven votes, and the Prince of Ponte-Corvo only one.

Matters were in this state when there suddenly arrived an old French merchant, long established at Gottenburg, where he had not been successful in his commercial transactions, and who was an excellent agent in elections. Sent by the Prince of Ponte-Corvo with letters and funds, he was directed to set at work every agency in support of the French candidate. In a very short time the most extraordinary rumours were afloat. It was whispered about that it needed very little penetration to discover the true wishes of France, wishes which she was compelled to conceal for political reasons sufficiently apparent, and that these evidently pointed to the elevation to the throne of Sweden of the Prince of Ponte-Corvo, that illustrious general and wise counsellor, who had been the inspirer of Napoleon in his most successful campaigns, and in his greatest acts of policy. This comedy, played with much tact, was perfectly successful; and within a few hours the new opinion had spread so widely, that it involved the government and the assembly of the states, the King was compelled to renew the presentation he had made, the *comité électoral* to reverse its vote, and in a single night the Prince



of Ponte-Corvo was proposed and elected almost unanimously, Prince Royal, heir apparent to the crown of Sweden.

Every circumstance attending this revolution was to be equally strange. When the secret agent, who contrived this sudden electoral reversal, set out from Paris, Napoleon, fearing that he might abuse the name of France, had charged the Minister of Foreign Affairs to disavow him, but the disavowal had arrived at Stockholm too late. The prince chosen to be the ally of France (we shall speedily see how much he was so) was already elected. Napoleon, on learning of this election smiled with a sort of bitterness, as though he had penetrated into the depths of the future; but he spoke of it with a kind of indifference, having absolute faith in his own strength, and regarding the ingratitude which he foresaw as one of the ornaments of the career of a great man. He received with mingled hauteur and benignity his old general, Bernadotte, when he came to solicit that approbation which was absolutely necessary to him as regarded Sweden; he told him that he was a stranger to his elevation, for that his policy did not permit him to interfere in the matter, but that he regarded it with pleasure as an homage rendered to the glory of the French arms; that he felt convinced that Marshal Bernadotte, a leader of his armies, would never forget what was due to his country, and in this confidence he concurred in the election made by the Swedes, and, as he was unwilling that a Frenchman should make abroad an appearance which was not worthy of the dignity of France, he had ordered M. Mollien to supply him with the funds of which he might have need.

Immediately after his arrival at Stockholm the Prince of Ponte-Corvo devoted himself to flattering all parties, and pretending in turn to hold the opinions of each. For some time this conduct was possible, and might succeed up to the moment when the bursting forth against us of a storm of universal hatred would render the part of irreconcilable hatred against France also successful. In the meantime, being desirous of immediately gratifying Swedish pride, the Prince Royal of Sweden, with the precipitation of a new comer, had devised a strange overture to make to the French minister, and which proved what an idea he had formed of political fidelity.

It was at this period, as we have already said, that Napoleon prepared, without hurrying his proceedings, for a campaign against Russia. In every direction there were rumours of a great war in the North. The Prince Royal of Sweden displaying on this occasion an affected devotion towards France, said to our minister that he saw very plainly what was in preparation, and that there would soon be a great



war ; he referred to the important services he had rendered in the war of 1807 (and it must be admitted that his services on that occasion were important), observed that such a war must be dangerous and difficult, that it would render necessary to Napoleon powerful alliances, that a Swedish army thrown into Finland, almost at the gates of St. Petersburg, would be an immense assistance, but that there was little probability that this province could be recovered, that its recovery was considered hopeless amongst the Swedes who regarded Norway as the natural and necessary recompense for its loss ; and declared that if Napoleon would at once secure Norway to Sweden he would place the Swedes at his entire disposal. He had the hardihood to conclude by threatening his immediate hostility should his proposition not be accepted, and after having shown how he could serve took pains to point out how he could injure.

The French minister hastened to write to Paris for the answer which he should make to such a proposition. Napoleon, let it be said to his praise, on receiving this information made a movement of indignation which had great results. He blushed with indignation and contempt at such a proposition, and addressed on the subject to his Minister for Foreign Affairs one of the best and most honorable letters he ever wrote in his life, expressing his regret at the foolish line of conduct adopted by the new Prince Royal, declaring that to betray Denmark would be a crime which was to France impossible ; and that as to the services offered, or the injuries threatened, France feared no enemy and was dependent on no ally. He recommended M. Alguer, our minister, not to wound the prince, but to make him understand that his precipitancy and the tone which he had adopted were a mistake, and that no answer would be given to him with respect to the subjects on which he had touched so lightly, since he was only the heir apparent. Napoleon further directed his minister to assure the King and his ministers that all that France expected of Sweden was fidelity to treaties, especially to the last treaty of peace which was being at that moment scandalously violated, and that he especially required the total suppression of the depôt at Gottenbourg, on neglect of which war would recommence, and Swedish Pomerania, but recently restored, would again be seized as a pledge to compel Sweden to return to its duty. By the same courier Napoleon recommended Denmark, without giving any reason, to maintain numerous bodies of troops in Norway.

Such was the state of affairs in Europe on the eve of that great and last struggle on which Napoleon was now about to enter. The most complete external submission covered the bitterest secret hatred, and where there was not

hatred there was embarrassment. Thus our German allies, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Saxony, and Baden, whilst they prepared the contingents demanded of them, trembled in secret at the hatred which they saw to be occasioned by the conscription. Attached to the cause of Napoleon both by their fears and their interests they were earnestly desirous that he should not expose himself to fresh hazards, and on this account were extraordinarily terrified at the idea of the approaching war. The King of Wurtemberg especially, considering that alone good which increased either his revenues or his territory, having as much energy as spirit, and always expressing his candid opinion to the all powerful protector of the confederation of the Rhine, had addressed to him some objections relative to the preparations for the new war, and to the contribution of the Wurtemberg contingent demanded for Dantzic. Napoleon had immediately replied to him by a long and curious letter, in which was displayed all the strange fatality under the control of which he ran into new hazards. He said that he preferred to have German rather than French troops at Dantzic, as they excited less umbrage, and that it was impossible not to take up a position at Dantzic, since it was the true base of operations for a campaign in the North; that this campaign would not spring from his, Napoleon's wishes, but from the fantasy of a young warlike prince who was anxious to make a brilliant début in the world; that it was possible this campaign might be delayed a year, but was inevitable, and that it would have been very ill judged to have allowed the confederation to have been surprised by an enemy who had been permitted to make his preparations with impunity; that he had, therefore, obeyed necessity and not his own will, and demanded the two Wurtemberg battalions necessary to complete the garrison of Dantzic.

News now arrived from the East, and information arrived respecting the manner in which the first overtures had been received at Constantinople. Moldavia and Wallachia had been saved, but it was not so easy to convert the Turks into allies. In fact, on seeing that Russia was compelled to withdraw a portion of her forces, they had promised to make no concessions for the sake of having peace with her, but, distrusting us as much as M. de Metternich had said, they had scrupulously declined to listen to any proposal of alliance with us. Peace was their only object, and they awaited with impatience the day when Russia, pressed hard by Napoleon, would be constrained to conclude with her an advantageous peace, and regarded that only as advantageous which should cost them no part of their territory. Russia, taking into

consideration the probable course of events, had addressed to her a proposition that she should retain Bessarabia and Moldavia and restore to Turkey Wallachia. She had demanded, besides, the independence of Servia. The Turks, however, perceived that the time was fast approaching when Russia would not be able to leave any of her troops on the Danube, and had rejected all these offers, demanding in all its integrity the *status ante bellum*. In the meantime they dissembled their secret resentment against France, whilst at the same time their care not to engage themselves to her was so great, that they eluded even the overtures of Austria, displaying no less evasion with regard to her than with us, and showing in every portion of their conduct that if they had lost that savage energy of character in which had formerly consisted their greatness, they were gaining every day greater skill in political finesse.

Whilst employed in making his diplomatic as well as military preparations for the great war in the North, Napoleon had taken pains to arrange the domestic affairs of the empire, so as to leave no source of embarrassment behind him during an absence of which he could not foresee the duration. He had desired, as we have already said, to assemble the Council by means of which he hoped to bring the religious differences to an end, on the day of the baptism of the King of Rome. It had appeared to him very proper to join to all the bodies of the state, assembled around the cradle of his son, the Catholic church itself, and to have consecrated by her the title of King of Rome, which had been given to the heir of the new empire. But the Bishops, either because they objected to entering into this species of engagement, or because the reason they alleged was sincere, declared that the greater number of them were too aged to endure the fatigue of a double ceremony on the same day, and the assembly of the Council was deferred until the day after the baptism. The Bishops, accordingly, were only to assist at the baptism individually, and not as a body representing the church.

The 9th of June was the day selected for the solemn ceremony of the baptism of the King of Rome. Every preparation had been made to render this ceremony worthy the greatness of the Empire, and the vast fortunes to which the young king appeared to be destined. On the evening of the 8th of June Napoleon arrived at Paris, followed by the Kings of his family, and by the Duke of Wurzburg, who had been sent by the Emperor of Austria to represent him at the baptism of his grandson. All the population of Paris had thronged around the superb cortége, already partly consoled for their commercial sufferings by a marked renewal of



industrial activity, and the immense orders of the civil list and the war department. Paris still applauded her Emperor, although her applause was not like that of earlier times; she still applauded him, being always dazzled and fascinated whenever she saw him, always marvelling at his fortune and his glory, always carried away, as all populations are, by the excitement of grand fêtes. Paris blazed with triumphal fires; all the theatres were open gratis to the crowding multitudes; the public places were covered with gifts offered to the people of Paris by the happy father of the King of Rome; and that which contributed more than anything else to the general satisfaction was, that the delay of the war until another year enabled them to hope that it might be avoided altogether.

On the following day, the 9th of June, Napoleon, accompanied by his wife and his family, conducted his son to Notre-Dame, and presented him to the ministers of religion. A hundred Bishops and twenty Cardinals, the senate, the legislative body, the mayors of the large towns, and the representatives of Europe filled the sacred enclosure where the imperial infant was to receive the waters of baptism. When the Pontiff had concluded the ceremony and given the King of Rome into the hands of the *gouvernante* of the children of France, Madame de Montesquiou, the latter transferred him to Napoleon, who, taking him in his arms and elevating him above his head, presented him in this manner to the magnificent assembly which assisted at the ceremony with a visible emotion which speedily became general. This spectacle moved all hearts.

How great is the mystery which surrounds human life. How grievously would the spectators have been surprised if, behind this scene of prosperity and grandeur, they could suddenly have beheld a crowd of ruins, torrents of blood and fire, the flames of Moscow, the ice of the Beresina, Leipzig, Fontainebleau, the isle of Elba, Saint Hélena, and finally, the death of this august infant at eighteen years of age, in exile, unpossessed of a single one of those crowns which were now accumulated on his head; and could they have beheld, besides, all those other revolutions by which his family was still to be raised up after having been overthrown.

Leaving the metropolis in the midst of an immense multitude, Napoleon repaired to the Hotel de Ville, where an imperial banquet had been prepared. On the following days fêtes of all kinds succeeded, for Napoleon was desirous to prolong as much as possible the manifestations of public joy. But the terrible destiny which disposes of the lives of the greatest as well as of the humblest of mortals, and hurries



them on unceasingly to the end assigned to their career, would not allow to him any long delay. The most serious affairs, inextricably interwoven with each other, demanded in uninterrupted succession his entire attention. On the 9th of June he had attended the baptism of his son, and on the 16th of June it was necessary to convoke the council.

We have observed at the commencement of this book the motives which induced Napoleon to convoke a council. An ecclesiastical commission composed of prelates, a civil commission composed of high political personages, and comprising amongst others the Prince Cambacérès's, had examined and determined upon as follows, the numerous questions excited by the convocation of such a council.

In the first place, could a council be convoked without the sanction or the presence of the Pope? The history of the church left no doubt with respect to this question, since there had been councils convoked by Emperors against Popes, for the purpose of condemning unworthy Pontiffs, and others convoked by Popes against Emperors who oppressed the church. Moreover, good sense, which is the surest light in religious as well as other matters, pointed out that the church, having had to save itself, and having succeeded with rare skill sometimes from unworthy Popes, sometimes from tyrannical Emperors, it was necessary that it should possess a constitution independent of those whom it might have either to restrain or punish.

The next question was, whether the council should be œcumenical, that is, general, or only national. A general council would have had more authority, and would have been more agreeable to the extended policy and exalted imagination of Napoleon. But although Napoleon possessed within his Empire and the allied states the greater part of Christendom, there remained too many prelates beyond his power in Spain, Austria, some portions of Germany, and Poland, to permit him to brave the inconvenience of their absence or of their opposition. By convoking a council exclusively national, which would comprise the Bishops of the French Empire, those of Italy and a part of Germany, there would be assembled a most imposing council, and one which would perfectly suffice for the settlement of the questions which would be submitted to it.

If it had been necessary to submit to the council the great question respecting the temporal sovereignty of the Popes, an œcumenical council would have been the only one capable of determining it. But all that Napoleon at present required was the acquisition of a government for the churches, by obtaining the canonical institution of the Bishops he had nominated.

If he could, by means of a decision imposed on the Pope, or approved of by him, obtain the canonical institution of these Prelates, he would be freed from his embarrassment; for, desiring to undertake nothing contrary to the dogmas of the church, he had no reason to fear a schism.

The method of the nomination and canonical institution, not being uniform in the different countries of Christendom, and having, moreover, varied with the progress of ages, a question of local discipline had arisen which a national council would be able to settle, and this solution of it would satisfy Napoleon, for the Pope would by this means be deprived of the instrument he had used to put a stop to all Napoleon's ecclesiastical plans.

It was, therefore, determined, that a council consisting of the Prelates of Italy, France, Holland, and a part of Germany, should be convoked at Paris, at the commencement of June, and that to its consideration should be submitted the grave question which had arisen between the temporal power and the church. The question was to be presented in an imperial message, the general purport of which was that Napoleon, on becoming possessed of the government of France had found the Catholic religion in a state of decay, and had successfully exerted himself for its re-establishment; that it was perfectly manifest that since his first ascent to the throne he had not committed a single action derogatory to the faith, and that he had, on the contrary, taken many measures for its extension and protection;—that, nevertheless, an unfortunate dissension had arisen between the Pope and the Emperor.

Napoleon, reckoning Italy amongst the number of his conquests, had been desirous of establishing his power over it on a firm foundation and had, therefore, regarded the Pope in his character of temporal Sovereign of the Roman states, as an enemy open or concealed, but always intractable, who neglected no opportunity of destroying the power of the French in Italy. And with respect to the Pope, it was not as spiritual Sovereign, but as the temporal Sovereign of Rome that he had, for a question of simply material interest, quarrelled with the temporal Sovereign of the French Empire. And what was the arm which he had employed against him?—excommunication; a weapon either entirely powerless, and therefore, exposing by its use, the spiritual authority to contempt, or destructive of all authority and therefore tending to nothing less than to throw both France and Europe into anarchy.

On this point complaint was easy, and was well calculated to find an echo, for almost all the clergy, the exceptions being a few fanatics, had disapproved of the bull of excommunication, and amongst the enlightened persons of all the

states there had been none who had not said that the Papacy had made use of a weapon that was ridiculous if weak, and culpable if efficacious, and worthy of the anarchists of 1793.

Having found the bull of excommunication ineffectual, the Pope had used as his second weapon the refusal of canonical institution to the nominated Bishops. He had thus permitted the German Episcopate to fall into such a state of decay, that out of twenty-four German sees only eight were filled, whereby a great temptation was offered to the princes, for the most part Protestants, to possess themselves of the temporalities of these sees.

There was reason to fear that the Pope had caused the same thing in France, for there were already twenty-seven sees vacant, for which the Emperor had provided, but for which the Pope had refused to provide on his side by bestowing canonical institution on the nominated prelates. Could it be possible, then, that the Pope, for the purpose of preserving his temporal advantages, had put the church in peril and allowed spiritual interests to decay.

By refusing institution to the nominated prelates the Pope had violated the Concordat. The Concordat was, therefore, an abrogated treaty, and the parties to it were able to place themselves in the position of former times, when the Pope did not institute the Bishops, and when the Bishops, elected by the Faithful, were confirmed and consecrated by the Metropolitan. On this subject was the question which the Emperor, unwilling to determine it himself, submitted to the consideration of the assembled church, in order that it might provide for its own safety.

The form of the Council, and the question to be submitted to them, having been determined, the high personages who afforded Napoleon the assistance of their talent in ecclesiastical affairs, besought him to take one last step with regard to the Pope, to send to him two or three Prelates of high consideration, for the purpose of announcing to him the convocation of the Council, and to persuade him to render its task more easy by consenting in advance to certain resolutions, which, if consented to by him, would be unanimously agreed to.

Napoleon had already sent to Savoy the Cardinals Spina and Caselli, and the little success they had met with had induced him to consider all attempts of the kind as useless. He believed that the Prelates assembled at Paris and under his own immediate control would obey his will, and that they would sanction under his dictation, a decision which might be sent to the Pope clothed in the authority of the Council, and which he would not dare to resist.



Amongst the ecclesiastics to whose advice he had recourse were several of great authority and real merit, and in all respects worthy of attention; and these were M. de Barral, Archbishop of Tours, M. Duvoisin, Bishop of Nantes, M. Mannay, Bishop of Trèves, and some others.

M. de Barral was one of the most respectable and learned prelates, particularly well acquainted with the traditions of the French church, and possessed of much talent in the management of affairs. He had been agent-general of the clergy and enjoyed much authority. M. Duvoisin, Bishop of Nantes, formerly Professor in Sarbonne, and one of the most renowned of professors, added to a most profound acquaintance with ecclesiastical matters, an exalted intellect, extreme tact, and remarkable political talent—a talent which every day became rarer amongst the heads of the church, and which did not consist in the art of gaining the confidence of sovereigns for the purpose of governing them, but in that superior good sense which has enabled the church to adapt itself to the genius of the ages through which it has existed, and to pass through them victoriously. Finally, M. Mannay, Bishop of Trèves, inferior in talents to those just mentioned, was nevertheless a wise and learned man, and a judicious adviser.

MM. de Barral, Duvoisin, and Mannay, having no solicitude respecting their own interests, but deploring the dominating character of Napoleon, who wished to render the church dependent on the Empire, and profoundly afflicted at the violence which he had permitted himself to offer to the Holy Father, were nevertheless of opinion that being powerful as he was, and destined without doubt to found a dynasty, and being as he was of a temper extremely friendly to the church, it was necessary rather to guide and calm him than to irritate him by an opposition of which the moving principle might be easily divined, and which was neither religious nor liberal, but Royalist. As the church had employed intrigue for the purpose of obtaining power, might it not make use of prudence for the purpose of guiding a powerful man when its object was not power but existence? Many persons, moreover, feared to see in Napoleon a new Henry VIII. ready to drive the nation to a species of religious independence which must end in Protestantism.

Such were the reasons which induced the Prelates to treat Napoleon with great caution, although they deplored the senseless despotism which hurried him into wishing to change the constitution of the Holy See, and to place the church in a position of dependence on the Emperors as she had



been under Constantine. Aided by Cardinal Fesch and many of the Prelates assembled at Paris, they persuaded Napoleon to send to Savoy a new deputation, consisting of MM. de Barral, Duvoisin, Mannay, to make before the opening of the Council one conciliatory step towards the Pope.

These three Prelates were not to speak in the name of the Emperor, who was supposed to have sanctioned the mission without, however, having ordered it, but in the name of a crowd of Bishops already assembled in Paris, and desiring, before forming themselves into a council, to concert with the head of the church, in order, if possible, to proceed in conformity with his views. Certain of the Bishops, after having conferred amongst themselves and with Cardinal Fesch, had written letters to the Holy Father, in which, whilst professing the utmost devotion to him, and their anxiety to preserve the unity of the Catholic church, they had besought him to restore peace to the church now threatened by a new schism by the man who had re-established it, and who could save it.

M. the Archbishop of Tours, MM. the Bishops of Nantes and Trèves, were to present these letters to the Pope, and to propose to him, still in the name of the French clergy, that he should at once grant canonical institution to the twenty-seven Prelates nominated by the Emperor, in order that so many churches might not remain empty, and that a period might be put to the conflicts raised by the Vicars Capitular, and secondly, that he should add a clause to the Concordat relative to the canonical institution; according to which the Pope should be compelled to grant the institution within the space of three months, if he could not shew any cause which rendered the nominated persons unworthy of it. These three months having expired, the metropolitan, or, in his default, the oldest Prelate in the ecclesiastical province, was to be authorised to confer the canonical institution.

If there be any arrangement which is in especial conformity with good sense, with policy, and the respective rights of the Church and the State, it is incontestably that which confers the choice of Bishops on the temporal Sovereign of a country, and the confirmation of this choice on the head of the universal church under the form of canonical institution. A power such as that exercised, Bishops could only proceed from these two authorities, from the Imperial Sovereign in the first place, for he alone has the right to confer the right of exercising authority within the limits of his territory, and is, moreover, alone able to judge of the merits of his subjects; and in the next place from the Spiritual Sovereign, who should interfere to assure himself that the nominated persons

are in conformity with the Catholic faith. It is very true that a Pope may abuse canonical institution, as a temporal sovereign may abuse the power of nomination; each kind of abuse is possible, and has existed in unhappy times, from which, however, the church has escaped without perishing. But the destruction of the double tie which attaches the bishops both to the chief of the state and to the head of the church, would destroy that beautiful system which has permitted that there should exist in Christendom two governments, side by side, without any mutual interference or disparagement,—a religious government charged with the duty of directing the souls of men towards heaven, and a civil government charged with the duty of guiding them in the performance of the duties they owe to society.

The partisans of the opposite opinion, and that which was at this moment professed by Napoleon, who had thought differently at the period of signing the Concordat, appealed to ancient traditions, and the first ages of the church when Prelates were not instituted by the Pope, since in France the necessity of their institution by the Holy See had not been recognised until the Concordat of Francis I. and Louis X., and if search were made into ages still more remote, it would be found that the Bishops were neither nominated by the Sovereign nor instituted by the Pope; for in the simplicity of ancient times the faithful chose their shepherds and the metropolitan consecrated them. In the course of time this power had been gradually transformed from the faithful to the chapters, from the chapters to the kings, and the right of confirming the election, for the sake of the interests of religion, had been transformed from the simple metropolitan to him who was the metropolitan's metropolitan, namely, the Pope. If either of these primitive customs were revived, it would be necessary to revive the other, and to do this would be to proceed in a direction not only contrary to the course of time but also to reason.

A strange concession was therefore demanded of the Pope, when it was required of him that he should abandon the right of canonical institution. It is true that it was proposed that the Pope should be allowed three months to institute the nominated Prelates, and that he might reject those who were nominated, on the ground of unworthiness. But who was to be the ultimate judge of their worthiness? Evidently the Emperor; since if he insisted, the metropolitan would eventually institute them. In this way therefore, the right of institution would fall from the hands of the Pope. But at the present moment all minds were acutely sensible of the decay of the German church resulting from the vacancy of

almost all its sees, and of the danger which threatened the French church from the vacancy of a fourth part of its sees, and were vividly struck with the fact that Pius VII. made use of canonical institution as a defensive weapon, whereas its only legitimate purpose was to maintain the unity of the faith, by rejecting as Prelates persons unworthy either in respect to morals, learning, or orthodoxy.

The wisest course of proceeding would have been to have obtained from the Pope, by influencing either his amiability or his prudence, the institution of the twenty-seven Prelates nominated by the Emperor; to demand this of him for the sake of religion, and to ask of him no sacrifice of principle. He would thus have been only temporarily disarmed, it is true, but disarmed of a dangerous weapon.

However this might be, the Prelates who had charged the three envoys to speak in their name, supported the additional clause of the Concordat as strongly as Napoleon himself, who, indeed, set the maintenance of the Concordat at this price; and as this word *Concordat* had been rendered a sort of magic word signifying re-establishment of the altars, cessation from the persecution of the priests, and a thousand other benefits, so when Napoleon mentioned the abolishment of the Concordat, it appeared like an intimation of the abolition of all the guarantees given to religion, to worship, to the priests, and that in respect to all these things there would be a return to the state of affairs before the Concordat. By declaring, therefore, the abolition of the Concordat, should the new clause relative to the canonical institution not be accepted, he produced, as he desired, considerable excitement.

The three envoys were authorised, should they find the Pope more tractable than hitherto, to exceed the objects to which their mission was first confined, and to confer with the Holy Father respecting the position of the Holy See, the position of future Popes, and to proceed even so far as to sign a provisional convention on the subject; the conditions of which were to be as follows:—The Pope to reside at his pleasure either at Rome, Avignon, or Paris; to be provided with a magnificent establishment at the expense of the Empire; to enjoy a revenue of two millions without any deductions on account of the Papacy, the cardinals and all the ministers of the spiritual government being liberally maintained at the cost of the imperial treasury; to have power to receive ambassadors from all the Powers, and to maintain representatives at their courts; to have entire freedom in respect to the management of spiritual affairs; and that all that conduced to the prosperity, the renown, or the propagation



of Catholicism, should be maintained, extended or re-established. Foreign missions to be restored with all the support of the Empire; the fathers of the holy land to be protected, and the Latins restored to all the privileges of worship at Jerusalem. And to all this magnificence, to which only independence was wanting, Napoleon annexed but the one condition,—that if the Pope preferred to reside at Rome he should take to the Emperor the oath taken by all the Prelates of his empire, and that if this condition were too repugnant to him, and he could consent to reside at Avignon, he should simply promise to do nothing contrary to the principles contained in the declaration of 1682.

As the interval between the moment when Napoleon decided to send this deputation and the time for the assembly of the council was short, three Prelates departed in haste, having but a period of ten days in which to accomplish their mission.

M. the Archbishop of Tours, (de Barral), MM. the Bishops of Nantes (Duvoisin), and of Trèves (Mannay), set forth without delay for Savoy, and arrived there as soon as the means of travelling available at the period permitted.

The Pope, although resigned with rare gentleness to a captivity the sufferings of which had for some time been much aggravated, felt nevertheless the weight of his chains, and although he feared what they came to announce with respect to the council, he experienced a sort of satisfaction on learning that three Prelates endowed with the imperial confidence had been sent to confer with him. He knew how great was the influence and the merit of these men; he knew also that their opinions were contrary to those called in France ultramontane, and that this was equivalent to their being in some degree his enemies; but this was as nothing in his eyes in comparison with the important circumstance that they had come to him with some communication.

Pius VII. having learned from M. de Chabral the names of the three Prelates consented to admit them immediately to his presence. With greater reverence than if he had been at Rome on the throne of the Cæsars, the three envoys presented themselves before the Pontiff, almost asking pardon that they were not as captive as he was, and coming to entreat him to crown his virtues by adding to his other sacrifices some new and indispensable ones, by abandoning for the sake of religion certain prerogatives which were dear to him. The manner, the noble language, the respectful demeanour of these worthy Prelates deeply affected the Pontiff, and at the touch of the gratification he experienced, all the graces of his character sprang to light. He behaved



towards them with the utmost goodwill, and showed that he trusted them, especially when he found that instead of having assembled to judge him, the object of their council was to concert with him on the manner of putting an end to the religious troubles, and that it besought him to find some means of coming to an agreement with that power which had re-established the altars, and which, having the power to destroy them, had no desire, fortunately, of doing so, provided he met with no opposition in temporal matters.

The Pope and the three Prelates held frequent interviews, sometimes having several in one day, although the latter, taking into consideration the Pope's feeble health, used much discretion in their requests for fresh interviews; for when they had not ventured to come he sent for them. The Bishop of Faenza, nominated Patriarch of Venice, and at this moment at Savoy on his way to join the council, had demanded permission to join this species of ecclesiastical council, and by the consent of each party had been admitted, for he pleased the Pope as an Italian, and an Italian *fort spirituel*, and was not displeasing to the envoys as an Italian who desired the immediate pacification of the church.

The Pope having referred with dignity and moderation to the odious captivity in which the head of the church was plunged, the profound isolation, the deprivation of all counsel and all means of communication in which he was condemned to live, declared the affection he had felt for General Bonaparte, now the powerful Emperor of the French, and the difficulty of the journey he had undertaken for the purpose of consecrating him at Paris; and then, pointing to the walls which shut him in, remarked on the strange contrast between the services rendered and the price which had been paid for them. He then entered into the details of the question respecting which the representatives of the council were charged to treat with him.

Respecting the canonical institution of the twenty-seven nominated Prelates he appeared disposed to yield, cloaking his submission under a detail of form, and consenting to institute the twenty-seven nominated Prelates, omitting in the act the name of Napoleon, and at the same time omitting the mention of the *motu proprio*, which would have given the appearance of his having nominated them himself, in place of confirming only the nomination which emanated from the imperial authority. On this point Pius VII. was ready to yield, and to put an end to the cessation of ecclesiastical government in France, in order that he might no longer be charged with interrupting it on account of a matter purely

personal to himself; but with respect to the additional clause of the Concordat limiting the time during which canonical institution could be granted, he could not persuade himself to yield. At first he objected that the space of three months was too short; but he declared that whatever was the term, if the institution could finally be given by the metropolitan, the head of the church would be spoiled and deprived of one of his most precious prerogatives. To this the three Prelates replied, by referring to the events of past times, showing that the Pope had not always enjoyed the power of instituting the bishops; that six months, if three were thought to be too few, would suffice for enquiry into the fitness of the nominated persons; that it was not right to suppose that the power of nomination would be exercised foolishly in the choice of unworthy prelates; that to make the right of institution any more than the means of securing a good choice of persons, would be to render it a weapon capable of being used against the temporal authority, and no one, the envoys said, was willing to admit that this was its legitimate use.

The unfortunate Pius VII. who, with considerable powers of mind, had not sufficient force of reason, to rise to those great principles on which rests the double investiture of ecclesiastical pastors with both temporal and spiritual power, and who, moreover, when it was said that canonical institution was not to be a weapon in the hands of the Pope, perceived a reproach in this argument, because in fact many persons had reported to him that he was accused of sacrificing, by refusing bulls, the interests of religion to the interests of the Holy See, knew not how to answer, perceiving on the one hand that there ought not to be a power at Rome of abusing the right of canonical institution, whilst on the other hand he could not permit himself to resign one of the prerogatives with which he had found the Holy See provided; for to do this would be, in his eyes, a weakness with which he was unwilling at any price to sully his memory. And when it was represented to him that he was mistaken in supposing that his yielding on this point would be blamed by the Catholic world—and this was true, for people were not then as Roman as they claim to be at the present day—he replied, “But how do you suppose that I can judge of that, alone, imprisoned, deprived of all council? And to this argument, as true as it was sad, the three Prelates, indignant at his captivity, knew not what to answer, and were silent with tears in their eyes, or advised him to consult a Cardinal who was in the neighbourhood, and who was the only man whose assistance they were authorised to offer him.

The subject of the general establishment of the Papacy was

a still more difficult one. To propose to the Pope to consecrate by his consent the abolition of the temporal power of the Holy See, at the price of a rich endowment, and beautiful palaces in the imperial capitals, was to propose to him the most grievous and dishonourable of abdications. However he recognised the decree annexing the Roman states of the Empire, and it was necessary to foresee the fall of Napoleon, in order to be able not to regard this decree as irrevocable; and it was possible, therefore, and the Prelates made the attempt, to advise him on the grounds of prudence and the interests of the Holy See, to accept a recompense which at a later period it might not be possible to obtain, and which was, moreover, accompanied by so many advantages conducing to the protection and propagation of the Catholic faith. MM. de Barral and Duvoisin, whilst expressing sincere grief at Napoleon's proceedings, insisted much on the necessity of behaving cautiously towards a man who might so easily play in France the part acted by Henry VIII. in England; on the wisdom of taking advantage of those compensations, which he felt compelled to offer at the moment when he was despoiling the church, and which he would not, probably, care to grant when the annihilation of the Pope's temporal power would be no more than one of those catastrophes to which the world had been so habituated for the last twenty years; and above all insisted on the aid which would be obtained from him in the meantime in the propagation of the faith, when his unbridled ambition should have been satisfied. In reply to this the Pope acknowledged the difficulty of inducing Napoleon to retract his resolutions; and did not dispute the probable duration of his Empire (although he did not regard it as imperishable, and displayed remarkable doubts on the subject); but, without regard to any such mundane considerations, displayed, on the grounds of conscience and honour, an invincible repugnance to make the concessions demanded of him. To make the pontifical residence in Paris was especially repugnant to his feelings. "Napoleon desires," he said, "to make the successor of the Apostles his chief almoner, but he will never obtain from me so great a debasement of the Holy See. He thinks that he vanquishes me because he holds me in bonds, but he mistakes: I am old, and he will soon have nothing in his hands but the corpse of an old priest who died in chains."

To reside at Avignon, would, on account of its having been the residence of previous Popes in times of persecution, would have been more agreeable to Pius VII; but to acknowledge the declaration of 1682, which was on the condition on which he was to have his establishment there, would be



excessively painful to him, being full, as he was, of Roman prejudices. He constantly repeated that Alexander VIII. before his death had pronounced the condemnation of the propositions of Bossuet, and that to recognise and to subscribe to them would be regarded as a weak compliance torn from him by captivity. However, he made a distinction between the various propositions of Bossuet, and was ready to admit that which refused to the Pope the power of overthrowing temporal sovereigns by releasing subjects from their obedience. But he was full of scruples relative to the others, which declare, as we know, that the church is not an arbitrary government, that it has its laws which are the canons, that the authority of the Pope, although ordinarily superior to all other, meets sometimes with an authority superior to its own, namely, that of the church itself when assembled in œcumenical, or universal, councils. These maxims, which are but a fair abstract made by Bossuet of ecclesiastical history, and which place the church at the head of legal and regular governments, instead of degrading it to the rank of a despotic and arbitrary government, agitated Pius VII. and threw him into deep anxiety. "I will do nothing contrary to these maxims," he said, "for I have given my word of honour that I will not, and it is well known that I am an honourable man; but it should not be attempted to force me to sanction them by a formal acknowledgment, for I prefer remaining in prison to committing such a weakness." To return to Rome, even deprived of his temporal crown, was the object of the Pope's most earnest desire; for to re-enter Rome without a single sovereign honour, would have seemed to him almost equivalent to his re-establishment upon the chair of St. Peter. But to return to Rome at the price of an oath which would constitute him the subject of Napoleon, and force him to sanction the spoliation of St. Peter's patrimony, was more impossible to him than anything which had yet been demanded of him. "I demand no dotation," he said, "and I desire none. I do not ask for the Vatican but for the Catacombs. Let me be permitted to return with some old priests to assist me with their counsels, and I will continue my pontifical functions, submitting myself to the authority of Cæsar, even as the first apostles, and doing nothing either to disturb or to destroy it." But notwithstanding the sincerity of the Pope's humility, it was very evident that he indulged in the hope that in his abject condition he would be more powerful than when seated on the throne of St. Peter's, and from the depths of the catacombs hold Napoleon in check, and probably survive his colossal empire.



The tendency of his thoughts in this direction was very evident, and even avowed with naive ardour. But MM. de Barral, Duvoisin, and Mannay permitted him to entertain no illusion on the subject. They made him thoroughly understand that they would never allow him to return as a dethroned prince to a capital in which he had reigned as a sovereign, unless he returned recompensed and reconciled.

These explanations occupied many days. The envoys, to whom was now added the Bishop of Faenza, had succeeded in rendering Pius VII. much more tractable, and had made him understand that if he himself preferred captivity to making the least concession, he should be careful lest he deprived the church of advantages it could never recover. And in the last place they made him understand that at the close of May they should be compelled to depart to assist at the opening of the Council, fixed to take place at the commencement of June, and that it was necessary that he should come to his determination, and enable them to declare it to the assembled Prelates.

After having enumerated the various questions and repeated to him their opinion upon each, after having persuaded him to say that he was not averse to the institution of the twenty-seven nominated Prelates, and that desiring, even at the price of a great sacrifice, to give the church of France a testimony of confidence and affection, he would acknowledge, without renouncing canonical institution, that it was necessary to prevent the abuse which might be made of it by an ill-advised or malevolent Pontiff; and, finally, after having obtained from him an avowal that he would, when free, and assisted by his natural and legitimate counsellors, at least deliberate respecting the new establishment offered to the church, they persuaded him to consent to the drawing up of a declaration containing—first, his consent, for this time, to institute the twenty-seven nominated Prelates, without mention of the *proprio motu*; secondly, a declaration that for the future the Holy Sec should be bound to institute within six months the Bishops nominated by the temporal power, and that in its default the metropolitan should be considered authorised by the Pope to institute in his name; thirdly, a statement of the Pope's readiness, when he should be free and surrounded by his Cardinals, to listen to arrangements that should be submitted to him for the definitive establishment of the Holy Sec. The nature of these arrangements was not even indicated.

On the 20th of May the envoys took leave of the Pope, who parted with regret from these wise Prelates, since so unworthily calumniated by a portion of the clergy, and gave

them his benediction with affectionate earnestness. But he was much agitated, and during the night following their departure he persuaded himself that he had been guilty of a weakness, and that all Christendom would regard it as such, and accuse him of having, from fear of Napoleon or weariness of captivity, abandoned the interests of the Faith. This fear arose chiefly out of the last proposition, by which he had engaged himself eventually, when he should be free and provided with counsel, to examine the propositions which should be made to him relative to the pontifical establishment. He feared that he had thus in some degree agreed to the suppression of the temporal power of the Holy See, and the annexation of the Roman States to the French empire; and this idea threw him into such a state of trouble and despair that, having had the prefect summoned, and having learned from him that the Prelates had already left Savoy, besought him to send a courier after them and recall them, and to signify to them, should they decline to return, that the declaration must be regarded as invalid, as he had been surprised by his feebleness, his weariness, and failing health; and added—“See what it is to deprive a poor priest, aged and worn out, of the counsels which should enlighten him. He is thus exposed to the danger of covering himself with infamy. . .”

The prefect succeeded in tranquillising the Pontiff to some extent by proving to him that the two first propositions were, after all, conformable to what he had always thought and always said, and that as for the third, it was but a promise to examine, and contained no indication of any definite arrangement. Nevertheless, for the purpose of satisfying the Pope respecting this last point, the prefect sent a courier with a message that the paragraph in the declaration relating to the last proposition was to be held absolutely null; and that with regard to the remainder of it, the Pope still adhered to it, provided it were regarded neither as a treaty nor an engagement, but simply as a basis for negotiation. This being done Pius VII. grew calm again, and wrote to Cardinal Fesch a letter, in which, heaping praises on the three Prelates, and authorising the Council to place implicit confidence in their report, he expressed almost the same disposition as that which we have just portrayed.

When the Prelates sent to Savoy had returned to Paris, Napoleon was sufficiently well satisfied with the result of their mission, for the government of the church was no longer threatened with interruption, and all fear of schism had entirely vanished.

Almost all the Prelates had now arrived and amounted to nearly a hundred, of whom almost thirty were Italian.

Those who had failed to come were either infirm old men, incapable of making a long journey, or some Roman bishops who had refused the oath on account of the overthrow of the pontifical government. The disposition of the Prelates was of a nature to deceive the government and to deceive themselves respecting the result of the council. Although full of earnest compassion for the misfortunes of Pius VII., disapproving entirely of the abolition of the imperial power of the Holy See, and urged to discontent by the coteries of devoted Royalists in the midst of whom most of them habitually dwelt, they were very careful not to manifest their sentiments, especially since the catastrophe of the *black cardinals*. And those were generally the most hostile who were the most submissive, for in their terror they believed that Napoleon was almost as well acquainted with the secrets of their hearts as God himself, whilst they did not believe that he was as clement. Yet, although it needed but a slight spark to inflame all these sentiments concealed at the bottom of hearts, there was no one in the government of Napoleon capable of foreseeing the explosion which must be the result. M. Bigot de Préameneu, an honest and temperate minister, had no acquaintance with deliberative assemblies; and Napoleon himself, although in the habit of divining that of which he was ignorant, believed that he would manage his bishops as he had managed the members of his legislative corps. He troubled himself little more respecting his difference with the Pope, than with a difference which he had had with the grand Duke of Baden, although he was annoyed at this *querelle de pretres* as he called it, and which was a quarrel which had continued too long and obstinately for his taste. The Duke of Rovigo alone had been prudent enough to gain the confidence of several of the prelates, and, knowing how much the Royalists of Paris exerted themselves to win over the members of the Council, had conceived some apprehensions, which he imparted to Napoleon. But the Emperor, having always available Vincennes, his grenadiers, and his good fortune, and being blinded by the effect produced, by the birth of the King of Rome, an effect which equalled the *éclat* produced by his greatest victories, disregarded the apprehensions thus presented to his notice.

On Monday the 17th of June, the Council was assembled at the church of Notre Dame. At the earnest entreaty of Cardinal Fesch, who had assumed the right of presiding over the Council, by virtue of being Archbishop of Lyons, the Prelates agreed to grant him this honour; not so much because he was primate of Gaul, as because they wished to commence the operations of the Council by an act of defer-

ence to the Emperor. It had also been determined to follow the ceremonial adopted at the Council of Embrun in 1727, and that its members should take the oath of fidelity to the Holy See, which, since the Council of Trent, had been imposed on every assembly of Prelates, provincial, national, or general.

On the morning of the 17th of June, the Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, to the number of more than a hundred proceeded in procession from the Archiepiscopal Palace to Notre Dame, with the ceremonial usually observed by Councils. Although Napoleon, who employed no other precaution against license than silence, had strictly ordered the exclusion of the public and especially of journalists, curiosity drew a great number of persons to the gates.

After mass had been celebrated with much pomp, M. l'Abbé de Boulogne, Bishop of Troyes, on whom had fallen the duty of preaching the sermon usual at the opening of a Council, preached long and eloquently; observing a strict neutrality with respect to the Pope and the Emperor, speaking most respectfully of both of these powers, and of the importance of the existence of a good understanding between them. He formally expressed his adhesion to the doctrines of Bossuet, declared that in case of necessity a church could find in itself the means of its own safety, and thus adopted the Imperial doctrine, which tended to render the temporal power independent of the Pope, but at the same time made great professions of devotion to, and affection for, the imprisoned Pope. Singular symptom of the sentiments which filled all hearts. That which he said of the doctrines of 1682, and of the possible case of necessity in which a church would have to save itself, was considered merely as conventional expressions suited to the exigencies of the moment, whilst all that portion of his discourse which treated of the Papal power created, on the contrary, a profound sensation; and altogether this sermon, which was reviewed and censured by Cardinal Fesch, had all the appearance of a demonstration secretly hostile to the Emperor.

Immediately after the sermon, Cardinal Fesch, with the mitre on his head, ascended the throne, which was decked out in the customary manner for this ceremony, and took the oath prescribed by Pius IV;—*I acknowledge the Holy Catholic and apostolic Roman Church, Mother and Mistress of all other churches; I promise and swear sincere obedience to the Roman Pontiff, successor to St. Peter, Chief of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.*

These words, although merely a continental form, caused considerable emotion amongst the members of the council,



for to swear obedience to an imprisoned Pontiff, within some paces of the palace of the Emperor, who held him in captivity, seemed thoroughly audacious. They retired moved, and surprised; and no man of experience who should have beheld this assembly, could have failed to foresee that it would escape from those who pretended to control it.

Napoleon, on being informed of the aspect of affairs, was excessively irritated, and only calmed by being shown that, whilst awaiting the decision which should somewhat retrench the authority of the Roman See, the church of France should display its fidelity to it, in order that it might not be suspected or calumniated. But although somewhat oppressed, Napoleon was from this moment less confident of the result of the Council. He wished, therefore, that the direction of the assembly should be entrusted to persons on whom he could rely, and decided by a decree that it should be entrusted to a committee consisting of the president, three Prelates nominated by the Council, and the two Ministers of Worship of France and Italy, MM. Bigot de Préamencu and Rovara. He confirmed by his decree the resolution which had conferred the presidency on Cardinal Fesch.

A message had, moreover, been prepared in very impolitic language, containing a harsh and lengthy history of the dispute with Rome, and presenting the question which had to be solved in a manner far too imperative. It was on Thursday the 20th that the decree regulating the *tenue* of the assembly, and the message, were presented to the Council. The two days intervening between the Monday and the Thursday had been occupied in secret interviews, which were infinitely more active on the side of the malcontents than on the side of the adherents of the Imperial power.

On the 20th the Council held a great general sitting. The two ministers proceeded to Notre Dame in carriages belonging to the court, escorted by the imperial guard, and arrived with great pomp, bringing with them the decree respecting the formation of the committee, and the message. They took seats beside the president, and first read the decree, each in his own language. This exercise of authority, which recalled that which had been exercised by the Roman Emperors over the first councils, when Christianity had not yet established its government, and treated on terms of equality with the masters of the earth, created a lively sensation amongst the members of the Council, which was, however, expressed only in their demeanour. When the votes were thrown for the purpose of electing the three Prelates who were to complete the committee, of the hundred members who were present scarcely thirty voted for the candidate who ob-

tained the most. These were given to the Archbishop of Ravenna, who obtained this number because it was desired to pay the Italians the compliment of making one of their Prelates a member of the committee. The second number, twenty-seven, was obtained by M. d'Avisu, Archbishop of Bordeaux, a respectable but unenlightened ecclesiastic, who was at little pains to conceal his indignation at the captivity of the Holy Father. M. the Archbishop of Tours (de Barral), and M. the Bishop of Nantes (Duvoisin), the merits of both of whom were well known, obtained each nineteen votes, and on the votes being taken again, M. Duvoisin obtained the majority. After the formation of the committee the message was read; producing by its harsh and haughty expressions a very painful feeling; contradicting the apparently pacific tendency of the mission to Savoy, and causing the assembly to separate with sad and anxious impressions.

The choice made by the Council of members for the committee was the first troubled symptom. It is, indeed, by the choice of persons that assemblies, even those that are the most discreet, betray their real inclinations, for they are able in this manner to express their opinions, without exposing themselves to trouble and danger, by their manifestation. Thus, in the present instance, the only member of the Council who obtained a real majority, after the Archbishop of Ravenna, elected for the reason already mentioned, was the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who was notoriously adverse to the religious policy of the Imperial government.

Another symptom, of no less unsatisfactory a tendency, and due in great part to the tergiversation of Cardinal Fesch, was the position given to the twenty-seven nominated, but uninstituted Prelates. Of these there were eighteen whose episcopal character could not be disputed, although their title to the dioceses to which they were nominated might be; and these were those who having been promoted from one diocese to another had an incontestable title in respect of the old see. Nine of these twenty-seven, however, having become bishops only when presented to these sees, were not yet completely bishops as regarded the church, although they were as regarded the power by which they had been nominated. Twice they had been summoned to join the Council, and it was wrong to refuse to them a deliberative voice, especially as the ancient councils presented examples of members deliberating who were not bishops. In the preparatory conferences with Cardinal Fesch, Cardinal Maury, having been desirous of introducing one of the bishops not yet instituted, M. de Boulogne, preacher of the sermon at the opening of the council, had exclaimed that the presence of these prelates

in their dioceses had already been a scandal, and that such a scandal in the very assembly in which their fate was to be decided would be intolerable. Every one yielded submissively to these words of M. de Boulogne, and the *uninstituted*, as they were called, had been excluded without opposition from the preparatory meetings. They had been permitted to vote in the election of members for the committee, on the express condition that the permission extended to that time only, and was not to be regarded as a precedent. No one had dared to dispute the opinion which set aside the uninstituted bishops, and it became evident that if the ruler of the Empire was feared without the council, there was another ruler within it who was feared even more; and that was public opinion, which condemned the despotic violence of Napoleon towards the Holy See, and condemned this violence, we may add, much more than it condemned his theological opinions, since M. de Boulogne himself appeared disposed to admit limits to the right of canonical institution.

After the preliminary meetings a species of anxiety began to manifest itself on all sides. The prelates who were partisans of the government were not the most numerous, and were anxious for more support, and unwilling to give up their uninstituted colleagues. They complained that they were not supported by either Cardinal Fesch or the Minister of Worship, who were both equally ignorant of the art of managing an assembly, and vacillated by turns between the Emperor and the Council. Those prelates, forming a larger body, who, without being precisely partisans of the government, were anxious that there should be peace between the Emperor and the Pope, were grieved at the form of the message. And of this party the Italian prelates appeared especially amazed. They had set out on their journey with the idea that Napoleon was admired and feared, and at Paris they had found that he was doubtless very much feared, but that in spite of their fear the Parisian population judged and criticised its master, sometimes violently blaming him, and was far from submitting to the man whom it had desired to make the ruler of the whole world. These poor Italians, therefore, demanded an explanation of so strange a contrast, and whilst they shared the general anxiety, also experienced the greatest astonishment.

The prelates absolutely hostile to the government, as few in numbers as those who were absolutely in favour of it, were some of them filled with indignation, on account of the indignities offered to the Pope, whilst the others were under the domination of those passions of ancient Royalism which began to be fostered into new life by the passions of



the existing authority. But whatever might be the motive of their hostility, they were delighted at the spirit of the council, although terrified at the consequences which might be its result.

A new and important opportunity occurred for the manifestation by the council of the disposition by which it was animated, on the occasion of the drawing up of the address in reply to the Imperial message. The government having enunciated from its own point of view the facts to be considered and the questions arising from those facts, it now became the duty of the Council to present these facts and questions as viewed by itself. From thence resulted the necessity of an address, and as a natural consequence, the formation of a committee to draw it up. A committee was accordingly formed in accordance with the spirit of the Council, composed of the Cardinals Spina and Caselli, (enlightened persons, but like all the Italian members of this council, rather desirous of eluding difficulties than resolving them); the Archbishops of Bordeaux and Tours, the Bishops of Gand and Troyes, MM. de Broglie and de Boulogne, both of whom had passed from a feeling of enthusiastic admiration for the first Consul to an imprudent hatred for the Emperor, M. Duvoisin, the Bishop of Nantes, and finally, the Bishops de Comacchio and d'Ivrée, Italians whose chief wish was to pass safely through the position in which they found themselves.

This committee, over which Cardinal Fesch presided, discussed all those general questions which arose from the condition of affairs, and found it difficult to come to an agreement, especially in the presence of the Italians, on such subjects as the propositions of Bossuet; the bull of excommunication; the relations of the Holy See with the temporal power; the prerogatives of the Papacy and the power which it might have of resigning any of them in certain cases. The committee was unanimous respecting the necessity of a cordial understanding between Napoleon and Pius VII.; but whilst its members bowed before the more powerful of the two, their hearts inclined towards him who was a proscribed man and a prisoner. The text of the proposed address was cautious as regarded Napoleon, and full of devotion with respect to Pius VII.

On the 26th of June this text, which was drawn up by M. Duvoisin, was presented to the assembled Council; and although it had been drawn up by a man of great sagacity, and amended by various persons of opposite opinions, produced amongst the prelates, already excited by the circumstances of their position, the same sensations as those experi-



cenced by the committee. The Italians were shocked at the opinions of Bossuet, too openly enunciated; the moderate party was pained at the reference to the bull of excommunication; some thought that the rights of the temporal power should be more expressly acknowledged, and the competence of the Council more openly declared; whilst their opponents, on the contrary, were anxious that no engagement should be entered into on this last point, and desired to confine themselves to generalities, and an expression of anxiety to put an end to ecclesiastical evils.

In the meantime there occurred what was, in the eyes of inexperienced men, a phenomenon, but which in those of men accustomed to the régime of liberal countries appeared a very natural circumstance. Scarcely had the Prelates, so timid in Paris, been assembled in a council, than they underwent a sudden transformation; their timidity vanished; the sentiment by which the greater number were animated suddenly came to light, and this sentiment was one of sorrow, which at any moment might change into a feeling of indignation, for the captivity of Pius VII.

The debate on the proposed text of the address continued with much animation during five hours, when M. Dessoles, the Bishop of Chambéry, a respectable prelate, brother of a general in the service of the Emperor, arose, and with eyes animated with the idea of the proposition he was about to make, said the bishops assembled in council could not deliberate there as members of the church, whilst the head of the universal church, the venerable Pius VII., was in bonds. He proposed to the Council that it should go in a body to Saint-Cloud to demand of the Emperor the liberty of Pius VII., and added, that when this had been obtained they could then entertain the questions before them, and probably come to an agreement respecting them. At these words the assembly throbbed with respectful pity, and even remorse, at the idea that whilst they were tranquilly deliberating the Pope was a prisoner, without the society of a single friend to whom he might open his heart, and without even materials with which he might express the thoughts which agitated his soul; and a large portion of the assembled Prelates involuntarily arose with a cry of "Yes! yes! to Saint-Cloud!" The more prudent, perceiving the danger of the proposed step, wished and yet did not dare to oppose this generous impulse; for there was now more fear within the Council of the sentiment which animated it, than of the terrible power which held sway without. Cardinal Fesch, in a state of bewilderment, consulted the committee, as he could obtain no advice from the two ministers (whose presence irritated the

Council without guiding it), and followed the suggestion of M. Duvoisin to adjourn the sitting to the next day. This was a wise resolution and immediately adopted; the most prudent of the Prelates hastening to quit their seats, to induce the others to follow their example.

Notwithstanding the silence of the journals respecting them, the circumstances above narrated produced a great sensation throughout Paris; and giving much gratification to the party hostile to Napoleon—a party which was formerly very small but now become much increased by his own errors. The persons of this party thronged around the members of the Council, flattering them and encouraging them to advance still further in the same direction. But the unhappy Prelates, astonished at their own daring, had no sooner gone forth from Notre Dame than they experienced a renewal of their fears of the Duke de Rovigo, who, indeed, had not failed to intimate that it would be well for them to be cautious, as he was not the man to permit the scenes of the revolution to be renewed under a religious garb.

The legislative corps, assembled at this time, because it was desired that they should assist at the baptism, was surprised, confused, and jealous, that it should be idle and lifeless, whilst a convocation of priests was becoming a convocation of the states general of the empire, and producing heaven only knows what consequences. And in fact the Council did bear a great resemblance to the states general. In the meantime Napoleon, who, in spite of his far-sightedness, had not expected the display of spirit made by the Council, walked up and down his cabinet in a state of agitation, uttering threats but delaying to put them into execution, being restrained by MM. Duvoisin and Barral, who promised him that the result of the convocation of the Council should yet be a successful one, if he would but be patient and moderate.

On the following day the Council was calm, according to the habit of assemblies, which are calm, as are also individuals, on the day following a day of agitation, and agitated after a period of repose. MM. Duvoisin and Barral, and all the sagacious men who dreaded violent measures, and did not yet despair of a favorable result, expressed themselves to the effect, that when the address should have been adopted; when guarantees should have been given to the Imperial authority against the abuse of power by the Papacy; and that when the Council should have shown a disposition to deprive the Pope of the power of refusing the right of canonical institution, Napoleon, re-assured, would become more accommodating, and restore the Pope to the Faithful. By

means of such remonstrances as these, made throughout the Council in the course of familiar conversations, and by means also of making such further retrenchments that it became deprived of all character, the address was voted almost unanimously; the Italians abstaining from voting on account of the propositions of 1682.

In the sittings of the Council the uninstituted Prelates had been completely ignored, or rather they had ignored themselves by resigning that power of voting which they despaired of obtaining. The Prince Primate, Chancellor of the Confederation of the Rhine, and head of the German church, had with great difficulty been received into the Council; for its members, little acquainted with the men and circumstances of their times, had believed according to that which they had been told, that this ecclesiastical prince was a philosopher and a sceptic. They could not imagine that a noble and a prince, who dared to call himself a friend of Napoleon and of France, could be anything else. They had listened, however, with much profit to his complaints on the state of the German church; a state which was a striking proof of abuse to which canonical institution was liable, since instead of being a guarantee of the selection of fit persons, it had only become a weapon of war.

It became necessary, at length, to broach the great question on account of which the Council had been convoked, and M. Duvoisin announced that the Emperor demanded that it should immediately be taken into consideration. The assembly had in fact become inconvenient to Napoleon, and he was unwilling to leave it unoccupied. The Bishops of Trèves and Tournay were added to the committee which had drawn up the address, and it was charged with the consideration of the question of canonical institution. The government had declared that the Concordat had, it considered, been violated by the refusal of institution to the twenty-seven Prelates, whereby twenty-seven sees were left vacant, and that having been freed, therefore, from this treaty, it would only readopt it on consideration of its receiving modifications which would prevent a recurrence of the abuse of which it complained.

The committee, composed of twelve members, entered, therefore, on the consideration of this question under the presidency of Cardinal Fesch. The first thing which had to be done was to declare what had been agreed upon between the Pope and the three Prelates who had been sent to Savoy; and this declaration was made by M. Barral in a most judicious manner, in which respect for the Pope was mingled with lively sympathy and complete sincerity. He com-



municated the note consented to by Pius VII. taking care to suppress the last article, which had become to the Holy Father a source of so much anxiety. It was asked why this note had not been signed ; M. de Barral said wherefore, and Cardinal Fesch read the Pope's letter, by which the note was sanctioned and acknowledged. But according to the members of the committee, the note and the letter were equally valueless, and, at the best, only the commencement of an arrangement, and not in themselves an arrangement either precise or definite.

That simple settlement of the question to which Pius VII. had been persuaded having been, therefore, set aside, it was necessary to consider the question itself, and in the first place to examine the competence of the Council. M. Duvoisin established, therefore, the competence of the Council with logic which was as neat as it was vigorous. It was evident, in fact, that although incompetent to decide a question of dogma and general discipline, which the universal church could alone have decided, the Council was fully competent to decide a question of national discipline which concerned only the French church ; and the proof that the question was one of particular discipline alone consisted in the fact, that the mode of nomination and institution varied from country to country and was regulated by special treaties between various governments and the church. To this reasoning, however, the Bishop of Gand (M. de Broglie), the Bishop of Tournay (M. d'Hirn), and the Archbishop of Bordeaux (M. d'Aviau), replied, that a question of so great difficulty could not be settled without the concurrence of the Pope, and that the Council was incompetent to decide it alone. To this objection M. Duvoisin rejoined, that doubtless it would be better if this could be the case, but that the present case was one of extreme necessity, and that in such cases each church possessed within itself the means of self-preservation, and that such cases as those of a forced separation from the Pope, or the emptiness of the papal chair, or the possession of it by an unworthy Pope, rendered it necessary that the metropolitan should resume the power he formerly possessed of instituting bishops. The more prudent members of the council, however, were anxious that suppositious cases should be set aside, and that it should examine whether in the present instance institution by the Pope could be dispensed with.

When it became at length necessary to come to a decision respecting the competence of the Council, there were but three votes in its favour, and these were those of the three Prelates sent to Savoy. At this moment, therefore, the objects of the convocation had failed, and the matters in



question were exposed to all the chances of Napoleon's anger, which might violently dissolve the difficulty, without recourse either to the Pope or the Council. A message being sent to Saint Cloud, speedily followed by Cardinal Fesch in person, to inform him of what had occurred, the Emperor fell into a paroxysm of rage, declaring, with all kinds of contemptuous and injurious expressions that he had wished to restore the Gallican church to the greatness it had enjoyed under Bossuet, but that it was not worthy of such a mission, and that its bishops, instead of being the princes of the church, were but its vergers, and that he would take his own measures for relieving himself from the difficulty ; that he would make a law by which he would declare that each metropolitan had the power of instituting the nominated bishops, and that it should be seen that the church could preserve itself without the Pope.

At this moment M. Duvoisin arrived to calm an anger which it was easy to foresee, and to restrain its consequences ; and, indeed, having been withdrawn from the irritation which he almost always experienced in the presence of Cardinal Fesch by the influence of M. Duvoisin, he then exclaimed, " Let us hear M. Duvoisin ; he knows what he is talking about." M. Duvoisin, lamenting with much reason that the Council had disarmed itself by denying its own competence, maintained, nevertheless, that it was not necessary to act as though all were lost, and that by acting on a basis other than the competence of the Council, namely, the note of Savoy, it was possible to arrive at the same end by a different way. It was possible, he argued, to make a declaration by which it should be stipulated, for example, that the episcopal chairs should not remain vacant longer than a year, six months being afforded to the temporal power in which to nominate, and six months allowed to the Pope in which to institute ; and that when these six months should have elapsed, the Pope should be considered to have delegated his right of institution to the metropolitan. M. Duvoisin added, that it seemed impossible that the committee should be unwilling to agree to a settlement of the question which had been accepted by the Pope himself.

Napoleon consented to make this new attempt, and to defer to the morrow the exercise of his supreme authority, which was, in his opinion, quite sufficient to settle everything, in spite of all circumstances and all criticisms. MM. Fesch and Duvoisin retired to propose the new plan to the committee ; and after much sensible and urgent advice given by M. Duvoisin, the committee yielded to his representations, and the declaration of Savoy was unanimously, with the ex-

ception of the votes of the Archbishop of Bordeaux and the Bishop of Gand, made a decree of the Council.

This conclusion to a most formidable dispute was a source of great satisfaction to all prudent minds, and was particularly agreeable to the little court of Cardinal Fesch, for although the Cardinal was never tired of boasting of the heroism with which he resisted his nephew, his followers preferred that he should not have any occasion for its display. But this satisfaction was too readily entertained, for having been informed of what had taken place the members of the Royalist or bigoted party, employed themselves during the whole evening, and even during the whole of the night, in besieging the members of the committee with urgent declarations, that they were dishonoured, that they had given over the church to its tyrant, and that all was lost unless they retraced their steps in the morrow's sitting. This pleading was successful, and the committee promised, after having attempted to save themselves from Napoleon during the day, to save themselves from dishonour on the morrow.

On the following day, in fact, the committee having been assembled anew, appeared to have undergone a complete change. It was not the dread of Napoleon but that of the Catholic Church which now prevailed. The Cardinals Caselli and Spina, talented but weak men, were the first to retract. They pretended that when they had voted as they had, they were ignorant of the laws of the state, that they had since learned that they were in their very nature irrevocable when they had once been consecrated by the senate, and that therefore, before adopting the decree, it would be necessary that they should have the consent of the Pope, and thus was opened anew the question of the competence of the Council. The Bishop of Tonrny employed less ceremony in his retraction, and declared that he was adverse to the decree. The Bishops of Comacchio and d'Ivrée, with a vacillation common to all the Italian priests throughout this affair, explained their vote in their turn and then retracted it. M. de Boulogne, who was usually more consistent, retracted his also, and all that had been done was again undone. The committee had now fallen into a strange state of confusion, and attempted to escape from it by adopting the general principle of the decree, which was based on the indisputable note of Savoy, on condition that it should receive the consent of the Holy Father, in order to obtain the signature which was wanting to the note on which it was based.

This vote, such as it was, having been obtained, Cardinal Fesch earnestly pressed M. Barral and M. Duvoisin to consent to be, the one or the other of them, the reporter

of the resolution which had been taken. These gentlemen, however, whose advice had not prevailed, considered that they could not take upon themselves the duty of drawing up the report, and in this they committed an error, for the resolutions adopted were probably of less importance than the language in which they should be presented to the Council; and it was far better that they should be reported by persons sincerely desirous of a peaceable solution of the difficulty, than by enemies who were only anxious for trouble and confusion. MM. Duvoisin and Barral were now, in fact, irritated in their turn, and obstinately rejected the office they were entreated to undertake. On their refusal, it was entrusted to the Bishop of Tournay, although he did not know French, and M. de Boulogne was requested to give his report that grammatical correctness which it might probably want.

Those persons who were only anxious for scandals had now good reason for satisfaction. The compiler of the report made it the vehicle for all the opinions of his party; M. de Boulogne deprived it of all that was offensive to his fine rhetorical taste, but permitted it to retain all that which a judicious politician would have erased. The report was to be read to the Council on the 10th of July.

The secret had been carefully kept, as party secrets usually are. On the 10th of July the Council assembled with extreme curiosity and visible anxiety. Scarcely had the report been read when extreme emotion was manifested throughout all the ranks of the assembly. A judicious report might have calmed all opinions by granting to each a reasonable amount of satisfaction, and rendered acceptable to the Emperor an arrangement which was certainly acceptable to the hostile portion of the Council, since it had emanated from itself. But the report having been, on the contrary, drawn up exclusively in favour of the opinions of one party, it completely satisfied the members of that party, whilst it excited the indignation of their opponents. The partisans of the temporal authority said that to declare the incompetence of the Council was to place the whole question in the hands of the Pope, and that by so doing, therefore, no settlement could be obtained. To this it was replied that even if the Council were competent, its acts could not be of any force without the sanction of the Pope, for that the decisions of a Council were of no value until the Holy See acknowledged them. This omnipotence of the Pope asserted by those on the one side, led those of the opposite opinions to review the use which had lately been made of it by Pius VII., to cite the bull of excommunication, and to blame it as an act

tending to anarchy, and to ask what, had it succeeded, must have been the result.

At these words the Archbishop of Bordeaux threw himself into the very midst of the assembly, holding in his hand a book containing the acts of the Council of Trent, opened at the very article which conferred on the Pope the power of excommunicating sovereigns when they should encroach on the rights of the church. Refusing to be withheld he advanced, and casting the book upon the table, exclaimed, "You assert that sovereigns cannot be excommunicated, blame then the church, which declares that they can!" These words produced an immense effect amongst those who approved of them, and amongst those who feared the consequences that might result from them, for their utterance was almost a renewal of the excommunication of Napoleon to his face, almost within the verge of his palace, and under his very hand.

At this point of the discussion Cardinal Fesch somewhat recovering his presence of mind declared that it was impossible to continue the deliberation in the state in which the Council then was, and deferred to the morrow the definitive vote on the subject under discussion. The Council separated, therefore, with a general feeling of anxiety and terror.

When Napoleon was informed of the details of this sitting he thought that he beheld the commencement of a revolution. But he could not see that they were the evidences of public opinion bursting forth, in some degree in spite of itself, in reprobation of his proceedings. He could not learn the striking lesson taught by the fact that he could not assemble some old, feeble, trembling priests, strangers to any scheme of policy, without their expressing, as soon as they assembled, an energetic protest against his actions.

In all this Napoleon could only see as despotism could only see, the necessity of employing force to suppress those offensive manifestations; as though the evil could be destroyed by attacking the effects of which it was the cause. Napoleon treated his uncle very harshly, reproved him with his weakness and want of clear-sightedness; passed a decree declaring the immediate dissolution of the Council, and gave the most violent orders with respect to the individuals who had been the chiefs of the opposition. The Bishops of Tournay, Troyes, and Gand, were considered to be the persons chiefly in fault and pointed out as the first victims of this species of ecclesiastical insurrection. By Napoleon's order the Duke of Rovigo had them arrested in the night, and conducted to Vincennes, unjudged, unheard, and even without any explanation.

On the following day it became known that the Council was dissolved and that the three principal Prelates had been



sent to Vincennes. The clergy were especially moved by these circumstances, but were, we must add, as much terrified as indignant. The partisans of government whispered that the three Prelates had been found to be complicated in a dangerous intrigue, which had caused M. d'Astros to be imprisoned and M. Portalis to be excluded from the Council of state. In the meantime the other members of the Council, separated from each other, and deprived of that strength they had possessed in their union, fell into their old state of personal timidity. Amongst those who were the most terrified and the most inclined to demand their pardon were the Italians, who, considering the whole quarrel as one which did not concern them, and as being between Napoleon and the French church alone, were very unwilling, after having preserved their sees even after the captivity of Savoy, to fall into difficulties for a matter of mere form, such as canonical institution. Cardinal Maury, who had no desire to assist in new revolutions, and whose heart was as devoted to Napoleon as it was full of resentment against the church which had treated him so ungratefully, did not fail to report these sentiments held by the Italian Prelates to the Minister of Worship and to the Emperor himself. Nineteen Italians offered, and fifty or sixty French Prelates less indifferent than the Italians with regard to the settlement of the question, but not less terrified, could be relied on, to act in accordance with the wishes of the government. Cardinal Maury advised that the assent of each should be taken singly, saying, "It is an excellent wine but will be better in bottles than in the cask." This advice was taken, and a decree was passed almost similar to that which had been agreed to in the committee, limiting to a year the interval during which a see might remain vacant, allowing six months for nomination by the temporal power, and six months for canonical institution by the Pope, after the lapse of which period the metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province should be charged with the institution of the nominated persons. To this decree was added a clause directing that the sanction of the Pope should be obtained; but this clause was understood in the sense, that, if the Pope did not agree to the decree the Council would vote it anew on its independent authority, and submit it to the Emperor to be made a law of the state. This plan having been determined on, the Prelates on whom reliance could be placed were summoned, one after the other, to the presence of the Minister of Worship. Nineteen Italian Prelates gave their cordial adherence to the decree, sixty-six French Prelates followed their example, and thus eighty-five out of the one hundred and six members of the Council gave their votes in its favour.

Nor were all the remaining twenty directly opposed to the decree, for at least half of them rather withheld their consent than refused it.

This result having been obtained, Napoleon gave it his sanction, and, according to the advice of Prince Cambacérès, issued a decree directing a new convocation of the Council for the 5th of August. The Council met again, therefore, on that day, and having listened in silence to the reading of the decree, voted it almost unanimously.

It now remained to obtain the sanction of the Pope, not because there was any acknowledgment of the incompetence of the Council, but because it was necessary to conform to the natural and necessary usage of submitting to the supreme head of the church the acts of every assembly of Prelates. Napoleon consented, therefore, to send a deputation composed of Bishops and Archbishops to solicit the Papal approbation, and to add to it some Cardinals who might supply to Pius VII. that counsel of which he always complained that he was deprived.

Napoleon had accepted this result of the Council, in the first place because it brought it to a conclusion, and in the next because he had almost obtained his end in obtaining the limitation of the Pope's right of canonical institution. But he perceived that he had been, naturally, defeated, for a spirit of opposition, which was the more significant that it was involuntary, had manifested itself among the clergy, and had declared that it regarded him as the oppressor of the Pontiff. He consoled himself by the flattering belief that the deputation would soon bring from Savoy, in accordance with the terms of the decree, the institution of the twenty-seven nominated Prelates, which would suffice for the arrangement of the affairs of the French church, and the removal of the difficulties which at present interrupted its administration. In the meantime, weary of this priest's quarrel, as he had called it, since he had taken up the part of disregarding the Concordat, his best work, he devoted his whole attention to his great political and military undertakings.

Although deprived of free journals, at least in France, the attention of Europe was directed with mingled anxiety and curiosity to the misunderstanding, already very grave, between the Emperor Napoleon and the Emperor Alexander. Sometimes it was said that the war was inevitable and would commence immediately, that the French were about to pass the Vistula, and the Russians the Niemen; and at other times, that the quarrel was appeased and that each was withdrawing his troops within his own territories. Especially since the arrival of M. de Coulaïncourt at Paris, and

M. de Lauriston at St. Petersburg, had hopes been entertained that peace would be maintained. But the movements, which continually took place, of troops from the Rhine to the Elbe, were ill calculated to support these hopes, and destroyed the good effect of the pacific rumours which had circulated during the last two or three months. The friends of peace had but too much cause for anxiety, for Napoleon, who had resolved to defer the war, whilst he persisted in his determination that it should take place, had continued his preparations, only taking the precaution to dissimulate them sufficiently to prevent an open rupture before 1812. Thus, for example, after having delayed at first the departure of the fourth and sixth battalions of Marshal Davoust, and retained them at the depôt, he had changed his plan, and thinking that they could be nowhere better disciplined than under that vigilant and strict disciplinarian, he had marched them upon the Elbe. Thus there were not fewer than thirty-two battalions sent at once across the Rhine; and to oppose the effect of this fact, which it was impossible to conceal, he had ordered the withdrawal of the two Westphalian battalions, which were intended to complete the German portion of the garrison of Dantzic, and directed that this retrograde movement should be conducted with as much ostentation as possible, and that the march of the two French battalions on the Elbe should be declared to be only the conclusion of a march long since commenced by them. Having under his command the French and a portion of the German journals, he was able for a moment to deceive the public, but hundreds of Russian spies of all nations speedily made known the truth with considerable exaggerations.

In the instance above mentioned the Russian cabinet had not been deceived, and the Emperor Alexander had said to M. Lauriston that indeed two German battalions had retreated, but that at the same time more than thirty French battalions had advanced from the Wesel upon Hamburg; "however," he added, "I do not wish to be behind the Emperor Napoleon in pacific demonstrations, and as he has withdrawn two battalions I will withdraw a division."

M. de Lauriston, who was much terrified at the idea of a new Northern war, and who saw very clearly that it must result from the reciprocal armaments of the two emperors, besought the Emperor Alexander to be the wiser of the two, and to take the initiative in those explanations which were neglected either from motives of false pride, or ill-intentioned calculations. "Demand," he said to the Emperor Alexander, "an indemnity for Oldenburg, and I have no doubt that it will be granted to you; send some one to Paris

as bearer of your complaints, and I am certain that he will be received with cordiality." To these urgent entreaties the Emperor Alexander replied by an absolute refusal. He was unwilling, as he had already said, to demand compensation for Oldenburg, either in Germany or Poland, because in the one case he would be denounced as the spoiler of the German princes, and in the other he would be accused to the Poles as being desirous of dismembering the grand duchy of Warsaw. The Emperor Alexander was unwilling, moreover, to appear in the character of an intimidated prince, seeking at the Tuilleries a peace which he was thoroughly convinced he should not obtain; and he feared that he should but precipitate the impending war by explaining himself categorically upon certain points, such as, for example, the matters relating to commerce. He was as desirous as Napoleon of deferring the war to another year, and maintained, therefore, an extreme reserve, affirming with sincerity that he desired peace, promising, as a proof of his sincerity, that if the French Emperor would disarm he would instantly do so likewise, and adding that although distressed at the spoliation of the Prince of Oldenburg, that was not a matter of immediate importance; that he hoped some compensation would be granted, but that he did not insist upon obtaining it immediately, and that he should never make that matter a cause for war.

In this delicate and serious position of affairs, it would have required great care and the most judicious conduct to have prevented the war, and it needed but one imprudent word to render it inevitable and perhaps immediate. And how great was the fear, the character of Napoleon being, as it was, so impetuous, and his language so habitually energetic, that this word would not remain unspoken.

On the 15th August 1811, the day of his fête and grand reception, as it was well known that he was prompt to express the feelings of his heart, every one listened to his words with great attention, and strove to find in them some hint respecting the important question of the moment. He was on this occasion in a gay humour, and inclined to speak. His magnificent countenance beamed with good temper and intellect, and he could not have failed to attract the attention of men less curious and interested than those who now surrounded him. At length the greater number of the persons invited had departed; there remained the Ambassadors of Russia and Austria, (the Princes Kourakin and Schwarzenberg), the Ambassadors of Spain and Naples, and one or two of the ministers of the little German courts, which always listened anxiously to the words of the



giants who were in the habit of making them their playthings. Followed to and fro by these persons, and engaged in general conversation, Napoleon said to the Ambassador of Spain that it was a bad season in his country for military operations, that no decided operations could be carried on just then, but that in the autumn he would urge matters forward, and by one rapid stroke settle matters with the Spaniards, Portuguese, and English. Then turning towards the Prince Kourakin he spoke of a dispatch which had been fabricated by the English, couched in very arrogant terms, and purporting to be a dispatch addressed by France to Russia, and he said that it had not even the appearance of truth; to which Prince Kourakin replied that it certainly had not, for that it was quite impossible that he ever should receive such an one. Napoleon smiled quietly at this sally of pride on the part of Prince Kourakin, and then, as though to avenge himself a little, turned the conversation to the state of affairs with Turkey, respecting which, in fact, he had much to say. The Russians in the last campaign had remained masters of all the fortifications on the Danube, from Widin to the Black Sea. They had been less successful this year; and it was evident that they had suffered from the retreat which had taken place of certain of their divisions. Prince Kourakin endeavoured to explain away the reverses of the campaign, and naturally boasted considerably of the courage of the Russian soldiers. Whilst the Prince was speaking Napoleon gazed at him with much malice, and took great pleasure in watching the embarrassment with which he spoke, and fruitlessly endeavoured to prove his point. "Yes, yes," he said, at length, "your soldiers are very brave, as we Frenchmen are well aware; but your generals do not know how to use them, and it is impossible not to see that they are very badly manœuvred. It is very difficult to defend a line so long as that of the Danube, from Widin to the Black Sea. It is only possible to dispute one bank of a river when possessed of the means of transport to the other bank, for the true art of defence consists in knowing how to attack. Your generals have acted contrary to all rules." Prince Kourakin, desirous of excusing the Russian generals, declared, that the necessary forces had been wanting to them, that they had on this account been compelled to withdraw from a portion of the theatre of war; and then, perceiving the mistake which he had committed, added, that the state of the finances of the empire had necessitated this measure. Napoleon smiled at the Prince's awkwardness, and continued to play with him with as much spirit as grace. "The state of your finances," he said, "has obliged you to withdraw

from the Danube . . . . . Are you quite certain of that ? . . . . If that is the case you have made a sad financial blunder, for it is a general rule that troops of which the maintenance is too costly should be marched upon the enemy's territory. This is my usual mode of proceeding, and my finances are accordingly in a very good state." Then suddenly, abandoning the good humoured tone he had adopted during the interview, he continued, with the petulance of one no longer able to restrain himself; "But are we speaking seriously Prince? Are we now dictating despatches or writing for the journals? If it be so I will at once admit that your generals have been constantly victorious, and that it was the state of your finances which compelled you to withdraw a portion of your troops from living at the expense of the Turks, to make them live at the cost of the Russian treasury—I will grant all that; but if we are speaking frankly before three or four of your colleagues who know the real state of affairs, I will plainly tell you that you have been beaten; that your own errors have caused you to lose the line of the Danube, and that its loss resulted less from the ill advised manœuvres of your generals, than from the mistake of your government in depriving them of the necessary forces by withdrawing five divisions from the Danube on the Dnieper. And why was this done? To make a demonstration against me whom you call your ally, and who have no possible feelings towards you! You have committed faults upon faults! If you have any cause of anger against me, you should openly declare it. In any case, instead of scattering your forces you should have concentrated them against Turkey, so as to have overwhelmed it and compelled it to a peace which should have been as advantageous as that of Finland, and then you would have been in a position to have taken precautionary measures against me. But in policy, finance, and war, you have committed a thousand errors; and for whom? For the Prince of Oldenburg and some contrabandists. . . . . For the sake of such persons it is that you have exposed yourselves to the risk of a war with me, whose resources you well know! . . . . You choose to listen to the English, who tell you that I am resolved to make war upon you; you choose to ally yourselves with contrabandists whom your commercial measures have enriched; you arm yourselves against me, and I am compelled to arm in my turn, and we are now face to face ready to wage war! . . . . . You are as a hare which, having received shot in its tail, rises on its feet to look around, and thus exposes its head. . . . . As for myself, perceiving that I am threatened, I naturally take up weapons of defence . . . . . But it is necessary that this state of affairs should

come to an end." Napoleon, expressing himself with extreme volubility, and at the same time preserving a good-humored and even amicable tone, now paused for a moment, and afforded the Prince Kourakin an opportunity of replying. The Prince, whose remembrance or knowledge of the existing facts was but slight, although he was not wanting in finesse or skill in the conduct of important affairs failed to remind Napoleon that in the series of military armaments France had preceded Russia, and overwhelmed himself with protestations of friendship and devotion, declaring that Russia had never ceased to be faithful to the French alliance; that she had been greatly distressed by Napoleon's treatment of the Prince Oldenburg, to whom the court of Russia was strongly attached; that nothing could have more deeply pained the court of Russia than the seizure of the states of this Prince; but that Russia had, nevertheless, confined itself to remonstrances on the subject, to *reserves* . . . . "To *reserves*," replied Napoleon, "to reserves! You have made a formal protest, you have denounced me to Germany, to the Confederation of the Rhine, as a robber. . . . Perhaps you do not know that your Prince of Oldenburg was a great favourer of contraband traffic, that he broke his treaties both with you and with me, that he violated the compact which bound together the members of the Confederation of the Rhine, that according to the ancient German law I might have summoned him to my tribunal, placed him under the ban of the Empire, and dispossessed him without giving you an opportunity of making any objections? Instead of adopting this mode of proceeding I have anticipated your wishes, and offered him a recompense." Whilst Napoleon was uttering these words, he smiled as though he did not speak them in earnest, and seemed almost to acknowledge that he had acted with too much precipitation. Then he added in a tone of mingled regret and gentleness, "I admit that if I had known how great was the interest felt by you in the welfare of the Prince of Oldenburg I would not have acted as I have. But now what course shall I adopt? Shall I restore to you the territory of Oldenburg filled with my custom-house officers, the only condition in which I would restore it? This you would not wish. . . . In Poland I will grant you no compensation, none." . . . And Napoleon pronounced these last words with an accent which proved that Alexander had had good reason for being unwilling to expose himself to an attack on this point. . . . "In what quarter then," Napoleon continued, "shall we find a suitable compensation? . . . . Only make some request and I will endeavour to satisfy you. . . . Why have you let M. Nesselrode

depart at such a moment? . . . (M. Nesselrode the principal director of the affairs of the legation was quitting Paris.) It is necessary that your master should send either him or some other with powers to conclude an arrangement, satisfactorily removing our mutual causes of dissatisfaction; otherwise I will continue my armaments, and you know that I am not in the habit of permitting myself to be vanquished. . . . I suppose you reckon upon having allies! Where are they? Is Austria one of them; Austria with whom you were at war in 1809 and from whom you have taken a province at the conclusion of peace?" . . . And whilst uttering these words Napoleon looked at the Prince of Schwarzenberg who was silent, and held his eyes fixed on the ground. "Is Sweden one of them; Sweden from whom you have taken Finland? Is Prussia one of them; Prussia whose spoils you accepted at the peace of Tilsit after having been her ally? . . . You deceive yourselves, you will have no allies. Come to an understanding then with me, and let us have no war." . . . At the close of this interview Napoleon took the hand of the Prince Kourakin in the most friendly manner, and then dismissed the circle, smiling delightedly at the embarrassment of the Russian Ambassador, who exclaimed, as he left the Tuilleries, that he was suffocated, that it was very hot in the salons of the Emperor. This conversation recalled to the memory those which Napoleon had held with Lord Whitworth on the eve of the rupture of the peace of Amiens, and with M. de Metternich on the eve of the campaign of Wagram; and although it had not the violence of the former, nor the intentional gravity of the latter, it was capable of affording ground for very dangerous exaggerations, and such as would be extremely embarrassing to the Emperor Alexander, who was already too much compromised in the eyes of the nation in regard to the wounds suffered by his dignity.

On the following day Napoleon's flatterers, who were in the habit of celebrating the prowess of his lips as much as that of his sword, did not fail to relate how he had overwhelmed the Russian Ambassador; whilst his detractors, in the habit, on the contrary, of putting a bad construction on his best actions, were very active in declaring that he had violated every law of propriety in respect to the representative of one of the chief powers of Europe. Prince Kourakin, however, adopted no such tone in his report, which was simple and moderate; and the Emperor Alexander would have permitted this new outbreak of his formidable ally to have passed without remark, had not a number of letters sent to St. Petersburg, from Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, strangely



misrepresented the interview of 15th of August. "I should have wished," Alexander said to M. Lauriston, "to have taken no notice of this conversation, but all the salons of St. Petersburg are resounding with it, and this new circumstance has but confirmed my nation in its resolution to defend its dignity and independence to the death. Napoleon would not have spoken this if he were not resolved upon war. I remember his conversation with Lord Whitworth in 1803, and that which he held with M. de Metternich in 1809; and I can only see in that which has just taken place a sign which leaves little hopes of the maintenance of peace."

The Emperor Alexander made these observations with an air of extreme sadness, which was shared by his Minister, M. de Romanzoff, whose political existence depended on the maintenance of peace. Each of them declared that the first steps towards war would not be made by Russia, but it was very evident that they no longer retained any doubt respecting the approach of war, that the favourable impressions produced by the presence of M. de Lauriston, and the tone of his language, were completely dissipated, and that the autumn and winter would be occupied with active preparations for a decisive and terrible struggle.

In the meantime Napoleon despatched to the Elbe the fourth and sixth battalions, by which means the forces under Marshal Davoust were raised to eighty battalions of the finest infantry. Adding the *chasseurs corses* and those of the Po, with some Spanish and Portuguese detachments, Napoleon proposed to raise the corps of the Elbe to ninety battalions, and to distribute it in five divisions of equal strength. An excellent Polish division, another composed of veteran soldiers of the Hanseatic towns, and a third composed of Illyrians, would raise to eight the number of Marshal Davoust's division. Many French officers, some returned from foreign service since the annexation of their native country to France, others from the school of Generals Friant, Morand, and Gudin, had contributed to inspire with proper spirit these troops of foreign origin. Napoleon flattered himself that under the iron hand of Marshal Davoust, and within the influence of the flame of patriotism and military honour, which burnt in the ranks of his army, these Spaniards, Portuguese, Illyrians, and Hanse troops, would acquire the valour of the French themselves.

In the rear of the Elbe, Napoleon, as we have already said, formed his second army, called the corps of the Rhine, with a dozen regiments which had fought at Essling under Lannes, and Masséna, and to which he was desirous of adding the Dutch troops. Being certain that he would have a year in which

to complete his preparations, he proposed to raise these regiments to four and even five battalions, since he had renounced the plan of select battalions.

We may here observe what an incredible fertility of spirit he displayed in the creation of his armaments, a fertility which, being liable, as all great faculties are, to abuse, sometimes led to artificial creations, the unreality of which became only too apparent in the ensuing campaign. We have already seen that Napoleon was anxious to add to the class of the conscription of 1811, which had been wholly levied, a very considerable addition both in numbers and quality, by procuring the submission of the refractory recruits of the levies of former years. Eleven or twelve columns mobile overrunning France in every sense, had compelled fifty or sixty thousand of these refractory persons to submit. The measure had been severe but efficacious. As their detention, however, was a source of considerable difficulty, Napoleon determined to have them trained in the isles which border France, from which flight would be impossible. With this view he formed in these isles, and of good troops, regiments of instruction, of which the effective force was left undetermined and might be raised to fifteen thousand men. He formed one of these establishments in the isle of Walcheren, a second in the isle of Ré, a third in Belle-Ile and two in the Mediterranean, one of which was in Corsica and the other in the island of Elba.

Napoleon devoted the most sedulous attention to these establishments, and at length, considering them sufficiently well trained, drew some thousands from the regiments at Walcheren, to complete the fourth and sixth battalions of Marshal Davoust. His intention was, if this attempt succeeded, to furnish the Marshal with sufficient of these troops to raise all his battalions to a thousand men each.

These first detachments were perfectly successful, and of the men sent, scarcely a sixth were lost by desertion. The remaining five sixths presented in their ranks a robust and veteran appearance, and gave good hopes that they would become, under good treatment, very serviceable troops. Marshal Davoust, who knew how, when necessary, to lay aside his extreme severity, gave orders that they should be accustomed to discipline by gentle treatment. This plan was tried, and not without success. Unfortunately, when other bodies of these troops were sent from their various depôts they carried with them the fevers of Walcheren and other dangerous maladies. The first detachments, moreover, had not been sent until properly equipped and disciplined; but the latter were sent in peasant costume and totally uninstructed.

Marshal Davoust devoted his earnest attention to the task of remedying a portion of these evils, to the proper management of the unhappy persons sent, to the providing them with the necessary equipment, and to inspiring them with the martial spirit of his regular troops. But what a task was this ; and how much danger there was that, after having succeeded during twenty years, failure would at length ensue at the moment when all the most natural sentiments, too rudely repressed, should be driven to despair ! The care bestowed by Napoleon on the organization of his troops, was equalled by the attention which he bestowed on the provision of sufficient war matériel. His plan was to have at Dantzic, besides what would suffice for the subsistence of 20,000 men during twelve months, provisions sufficient for the maintenance of an army of four or five hundred thousand men during the same time ; and with this view he had, in the first place, ordered General Rapp to watch the stores of grain in this city, which is one of the chief dépôts of cereals in Europe, and to keep himself informed of the quantities in the magazines, so as only to purchase at favourable seasons. Having taken this precaution he then directed him to purchase 600,000 or 700,000 quintals of wheat, several millions of bushels of oats, and to buy up all the fodder he could find. Three military chests, the first at Dantzic, the second at Magdeburg, and the third at Mayence, known to him alone, in order that they might not be generally reckoned on, were secretly to furnish the necessary funds for these purchases.

The supply of stores, however, was not the only care ; it was also necessary to provide means for transporting them ; and Napoleon had already ordered the formation of a certain number of transport corps for the conduct of about 1500 waggons loaded with biscuit. Continually pondering on the subject, which occupied all his thoughts, and devising every moment new combinations, he had, since the preceding year, discovered means of transport still more efficacious and ingenious than those on which he had at first determined. The ordinary waggon, drawn by four horses, and driven by two men, was very well suited for the conveyance of the daily provision of troops which it accompanied ; and one such could carry one day's provision for a battalion. But something else was now required by Napoleon, who was planning to convey sufficient stores for the provision of his army during fifty or sixty days ; and having this end in view he conceived the idea of great chariots drawn by eight horses, conducted by three or four men, and capable of containing ten times the load of an ordinary waggon. A tenfold result would thus be obtained whilst the expense of conveyance would be

scarcely doubled. Considering, however, after further reflection, that this kind of carriage would be too heavy for the soil of Poland and Lithuania, Napoleon determined upon employing a chariot drawn by four horses and conducted by two men, which would leave the existing organization of the transport corps undisturbed, whilst the amount carried by each waggon might be trebled or quadrupled. He immediately gave orders, therefore, for the construction of waggons after this model in France, Germany, and Italy, wherever there were commissariat depôts, in order that the troops might have at the same time the old waggons for the conveyance of the provisions necessary for each day, and the new waggons for the transport of the stores sufficient for one or two months. Still further racking his brain, as it were, to provide for every contingency, he was desirous of adding to his means of transport *chars a la courtois* and *chars a boeuf*. The former are, as is well known, light, and easily drawn by a single horse, which is trained to follow the one preceding, so that one man is able to conduct a considerable number of them. The latter are heavy, but are drawn by strong animals which, feeding during the occasional moments of repose on the grass beneath their feet, occasion no trouble in the evening after having performed the most considerable services during the day. On account of these reasons, therefore, Napoleon resolved to add to the eight transport battalions which he had determined on for the army of Russia, four battalions *a la courtoise* and five battalions *a boeufs*, planning at the same time a method of organization which would permit the waggoners to transform themselves immediately into soldiers for the defence of the convoy they conducted.

Napoleon calculated that these seventeen battalions, conducting five or six thousand waggons, would render him secure of provisions for two hundred thousand men during two months, or for three hundred thousand men during three months. And this, he considered, would be sufficient, for he proposed to embark his stores on the Vistula at Dantzic, transporting them by its waters to Frische-haff, from Frische-haff to the Pregel, and from the Pregel by the interior canals to the Niemen. He had even despatched some naval officers to arrange the details of this plan. Arriving at the Niemen with 500,000 or 600,000 men, he would lead forward the half of them into the interior of Russia, and having, according to the preceding calculation, forty days provisions in his baggage train, he hoped to be able, with what he might procure on his route, to provide for the subsistence of his soldiers; for, in spite of their plans of devastation, the Russians would scarcely have time to destroy everything.



On these reasons and on these immense preparations Napoleon founded his hopes of being able to maintain his troops on the vast plains of the North, which he expected to find desert and devastated.

But these five or six thousand waggons required eight or ten thousand men to conduct them, and eighteen or twenty thousand horses or oxen to draw them ; and if we add thirty thousand artillery horses, and probably forty-four thousand cavalry, we may form some idea of the difficulties which had to be overcome in matter of providing the necessary stores. Napoleon hoped to make this necessary provision by delaying offensive operations until the fields should be clothed with herbage.

Knowing that the soldiers much preferred bread to biscuit, and having perceived that the difficulty of procuring bread did not arise from the baking, but from the labour of converting the grain into flour, he ordered the greater part of the cereals in Dantzic to be ground, and that the flour thus procured should be stored in barrels adapted to the new waggons, and that masons should be enlisted for the purpose of constructing ovens at the various places of encampment. These masons were to be incorporated amongst the troops of workmen of every calling whom he designed to carry with him, such as bakers, carpenters, smiths, &c.

The pontoon equipage, by no means the least important subject of care, also received improvements in this second year of preparation. He had ordered the construction at Dantzic of two pontoon equipages of 100 boats each, which would serve for throwing two bridges over the largest rivers. As there would seldom be a scarcity of wood in the region in which the war would be waged, and iron and cordage would be the only things difficult to procure, Napoleon ordered such of these things to be provided as would suffice for the construction, with wood to be procured on the spot, of a third pontoon bridge. He also ordered provision to be made of materials for the construction of fixed bridges. General Eblé, who had performed on the Tagus such marvels in this branch of military art, was placed at the head of the corps of pontonniers, to the service of which were assigned two thousand horses. "With such means," cried Napoleon, "we shall swallow up all obstacles !"

Although Napoleon had confided to Marshal Davoust the organization of the greater portion of the army, because he regarded him as a consummate disciplinarian, and an administrator at once just and severe, he did not intend to entrust him with the entire command, naturally reserving this for himself. But he wished, in case of sudden hostilities, to

have on the Elbe and the Oder, and under a single head, an army of 150,000 French and 50,000 Poles ready to throw themselves upon the Vistula. He proposed, at a later period, when operations should have commenced, to detach a portion of these troops, which, joined to the corps of the Rhine, should be divided between Marshals Oudinot and Ney. Marshal Oudinot was to assemble at Munster the regiments cantoned in Holland, and Marshal Ney at Mayence those which were cantoned on the Rhine. Each of these Marshals had been ordered to join their several corps immediately, and to commence the organization of their infantry and cavalry. As for the cavalry, they were each to receive their share on entering Germany, whither all the cavalry troops had already been sent in order to be mounted. Independently of these forces, so considerable in themselves, 100,000 allied troops of various nations were to be distributed among the different corps of our army.

Napoleon ordered Prince Eugène to be ready at the close of the following winter to cross the Alps with the army of Italy; and he had assembled in Lombardy almost the whole of the armies of Illyria and Naples. He had selected from each of the best regiments, consisting of five battalions, three battalions d'élite for service in Russia, proposing thus to form an army of 40,000 French, supported by 20,000 Italians, which should cross the Alps in March under the command of Prince Eugène. The fourth and fifth battalions retained at the dépôts, with many entire regiments of the Neapolitan army of Murat, were charged with the defence of Italy against the English and against insurgents. The levies of the conscription of 1811, and the refractory conscripts of the isle of Elba, having undergone a severe course of discipline, would refill successively the ranks of the fourth and fifth battalions, which would be exhausted for the purpose of filling the three first. Napoleon had, moreover, taken from the Italian and Illyrian troops ten or a dozen entire regiments for the purpose of creating an army of reserve, which would replace in Spain the Imperial guard and the Poles, whose departure for Russia he had already ordered. Thus, at the very moment when he was preparing to strike a great blow in the North, Napoleon did not renounce his intention of striking one in the South, pursuing simultaneously, as was his wont, all the objects he had in view. In the preceding year this army of reserve could have had no better destination than Spain, since there was the theatre of decisive events; but at the present time, on the contrary, the North having become the scene of final conflict, he should have directed to this quarter all his forces, confining himself in

Spain to energetic defensive operations on the limits of old Castille and Andalusia. But Napoleon, assuming all that his vast imagination conceived to be real, believed that he could at the same moment hurl the thunderbolt at Cadiz and at Moscow.

Whilst occupied with these vast conceptions, which were to be put into execution in the following spring, he was careful to visit a country which had been recently added to the Empire, a country on which he placed a high value, in which he hoped to produce a very favourable impression by his presence, and where he could personally inspect a portion of his preparations for war; this country was Holland. Naval affairs were, also, another reason which induced him to make this journey; for, with his usual determination to attend to every thing at the same time, he had by no means renounced his exertions in the establishment of his marine, and was as active on this subject as though he were not preparing for a war with Russia. He was anxious in the first place to hold the English in check, and by causing them continual anxiety to prevent them from exhausting England of troops by sending them to the Peninsula. With this purpose he had resolved to make them live in continual apprehensions of expeditions constantly prepared against Ireland, Sicily, and even Egypt, and hoped by these means to have, in the improbable case of no war taking place with Russia, the means of embarking 100,000 men.

Now that the Scheldt was entirely under his own control, he had altered his arrangements with regard to his flotilla at Boulogne; reducing it to what would suffice for the embarkation of 40,000 men instead of 150,000 as formerly, and thus confining it to a size which would render an expedition perfectly practicable. He had, besides, on the Scheldt, sixteen vessels at Flushing, and would soon have twenty-two. By adding a flotilla of brigs, corvettes, frigates, and large armed long boats, he reckoned upon having means for the embarkation of 30,000 men. He included, also, in his calculations the eight or ten vessels at the Texel, so long demanded of his brother Louis, and already prepared since the administration of Holland had been in his own hands. This squadron, escorting a flotilla, was capable of embarking 20,000 men. There were some frigates at Cherbourg, two vessels at Brest, four at Lorient, and seven at Rochefort, and with these materials Napoleon prepared to re-establish the Brest flotilla, which he desired to employ in the seizure he projected of the islands Jersey and Guernsey. Finally, he had eighteen vessels at Toulon, which he intended, with the aid of Genoa and Naples, to increase to twenty-four. He had

thus prepared in the Mediterranean means for the embarkation of 40,000 men, and for an expedition which might alternately threaten Cadiz, Algiers, Sicily, and Egypt. Three vessels and some frigates were ready at Venice, and were about to proceed to Ancona; to be followed by two others, and several frigates, so as to have complete command of the Adriatic.

These already vast resources Napoleon desired to increase in 1812 and 1813 to 80 or 100 vessels, and thus to possess means of transport for nearly 150,000 men. He had already sufficient for the purpose of throwing 30,000 men into Ireland, 20,000 into Sicily, 30,000 into Egypt, and thus filling England with consternation. These means would also enable him to recover the Cape, long since lost, and the isle of France and Martinique, lost but lately. If, therefore, the peace of Europe should be arranged without securing to France maritime peace as well, he would be able immediately to strike a blow at England.

These various preparations and certain details of his armaments for the war with Russia rendered it necessary that he should take a journey along the coasts; setting out, therefore, from Compeigne on the 19th of September, and stopping successively at Antwerp and Flushing, he inspected the works which had been ordered for the defence of the Scheldt, embarked on board the flotilla of Flushing under the flag of Admiral Missiessy, made sail, and was overtaken by a great storm which rendered communication with the land impossible for thirty-six hours. He was well satisfied with the condition of naval affairs in this quarter, and did not depart without distributing rewards and bestowing great praises on the Admiral.

One object of anxiety which occupied Napoleon's attention during this voyage arose from the fact that, as there were soldiers of all nations in the ranks of his army so there were sailors of all nations on board his vessels, and there was some danger that when out at sea they might become insubordinate and join the English. He determined, therefore, to place on board each vessel a guard composed of one hundred and fifty veteran French infantry. He had, independent of the imperial guard and foreign regiments, one hundred and thirty regiments of infantry, some consisting of five and some of six battalions, and he resolved to take from the best organized depôt battalions companies of infantry to be regular garrisons on board the vessels of the line. Putting into immediate execution, as was his wont, the idea which had occurred to him, he gave orders for the dispatch of these companies to all the ports at which the squadrons were assembled; and,



always impatient of delay, insisted at Antwerp that the ship-building should proceed incessantly, and that as soon as one vessel had been launched, another should be placed upon the stocks. As there was a want of the necessary wood, he planned a vast system of transport from Hamburg to Amsterdam, by means of small boats passing between the coast and the isles which lie along the shore of the north sea from the mouths of the Elbe to the Zuyderzee. Nor did he stop here. A dry summer, which had been very favorable to the vineyards, had checked the growth of the cereals, and the price of grain was rising every day; Napoleon withdrew, therefore, the licences which had been granted for the exportation of grain, and ordered the purchase of corn at Hamburg for France.

After having inspected the regiment of Walcheren and ordered various measures relative to the health and equipment of the men, Napoleon visited Amsterdam. The Dutch, much distressed at having lost their independence, hoped nevertheless to be recompensed in some degree by their incorporation with a vast empire, and by the vivifying administration of Napoleon. There had been some time before bloody executions on the occasion of the conscription in east Friesland; nevertheless, whether led away by the prestige of his glory, or the excitement which fêtes occasion to even the most phlegmatic people, the Dutch received with acclamations the man who had deprived them of their independence, and whom, as they speedily proved, they were far from loving. The reception was such, in fact, as might well deceive Napoleon; and as he beheld the resources of the country he indulged for a moment in a crowd of hopes and illusions.

Amongst the causes which had induced Napoleon to visit Holland, the defence of the new frontiers of the empire was not the least. With that admirable quickness of eye which enabled him to determine, with a mere glance at the map, how a country should be defended or attacked, he devised immediately the best system of defence for Holland. He determined in the first place, on account of the danger always threatened by the English, the chief depôt of stores should be neither at Texel, nor Amsterdam, nor even Rotterdam, but at Antwerp, and he ordered the immediate conveyance thither of all the contents of the Dutch arsenals. He determined that there should be a first line of defence passing by the Wesel, Koevarde, and Groningen, embracing not only Holland, properly so called, but Gueldres, the over Yssel, and Friesland; a somewhat feeble line, and only of the strength of advanced works. He designed a second stronger line to leave the Rhine towards Emmerich, following the Yssel,

passing by Deventer and Zwolle, embracing Gueldres, and a moiety of the Zuyderzee, and covering almost all Holland, with the exception of Friesland. But he resolved that the true line of defence should be that which leaving the Rhine, or Wahal, only at Garcum, should end at Waarden on the Zuyderzee. This line, in fact, included the most *hollandaise* part of Holland, consisting of fertile lands and flourishing cities, so situated that in case of an inundation they could be converted into isles, impenetrable even to a maritime enemy, by means of the fine works on the Texel, which would form the extreme and invincible point.

Assisted in the execution of these plans by the able general of engineers, Chasseloup, Napoleon ordered the construction of magnificent works at Texel, the object of which was the protection of an immense flotilla with its stores, affording it the means of entrance or departure in all states of the wind, and closing completely the Zuyderzee.

These orders having been given he proceeded to Wesel, where he directed other works for the defence of this city, and to afford it an administrative importance which it then did not possess. At the same time he made his presence in this quarter the pretext for the review of two divisions of cuirassiers. He inspected them between Dusseldorf and Cologne, made arrangements for supplying them with all that they required with respect to organization and equipment, and took advantage of their arrival on the Rhine to march them quietly on the Elbe. This was a convenient way of sending forward, almost unperceived, his heavy cavalry, of which these two divisions formed almost the half. He also employed himself at this time with the creation of the Lancers. He had already in Poland had an opportunity of perceiving the utility of the lance, and having resolved to employ it in the present war, determined to convert into regiments of lancers six regiments of dragoons, one of chasseurs, and two of Polish cavalry. Having bestowed the necessary attention upon these various matters, he proceeded to Cologne, and devoted his attention to its defence.

In the meantime he had to determine many points relative to the foreign and domestic policy of the empire. The court of Prussia, profoundly disquieted at the approaching war, perceiving that since its territory would be the road of the belligerent armies, it would be unable to remain neuter, and having no reason to favour Russia, which in 1807 had concluded peace at her expense, and had even accepted a portion of her territory (the district of Bialystok), was disposed to ally itself to Napoleon, provided that he would guarantee the integrity of the remainder of its states, and a territorial

recompense for effective assistance. Unfortunately Napoleon remained deaf to the hints he received on this subject, in order that his designs might remain the better concealed, and the terrified court attributed this reserve to an intention of seizing at some future day the whole Prussian kingdom. This terrible fear constantly weighed upon the mind of the King, and he lost not a moment in making preparations for war; his design being to demand of Napoleon, at the critical moment, a declaration of his intentions, and should he refuse to grant to Prussia his alliance, to throw himself beyond the Vistula with 100,000 or 150,000 men, and to join the Russians at Königsberg. However well dissembled were the preparations of the Prussian court they could not escape so acute an observer as Marshal Davoust; and moreover, M. de Hardenberg, endeavouring every day to obtain some explanation from the French minister, M. de Saint-Marsan, and with this purpose taking pains to show what means Prussia possessed of being able to assist an ally whose cause she might espouse, permitted himself to declare that she could raise in a few days, if necessary, an army of 150,000 men. These words falling from the lips of the first Prussian minister had been a ray of light, and Napoleon directed M. de Saint-Marsan to repair immediately to the minister and the king, and to declare to each that his eyes were at length opened to the designs of Prussia, and that it was necessary that she should immediately disarm, trusting to his word of honour that she should be admitted to his alliance on satisfactory conditions, when prudence would permit him to declare his designs; and that should she refuse obedience, Marshal Davoust would march upon Berlin with 100,000 men to efface from the map of Europe the last remnants of the Prussian monarchy. At the same time orders were given to Marshal Davoust to proceed without delay to the Oder, to cut off from the Prussian army the road of the Vistula, and to carry, if necessary, the court itself from Potsdam.

Napoleon had also to take very important measures with regard to Sweden. We have already related the circumstances attending the election of the new Prince Royal. This prince had not been able to forgive Napoleon for refusing to listen to his proposition with respect to the cession of Norway. Having owed his election simply to accidental circumstances, and more especially, the glory of the French armies, possessing the attachment of no party in Sweden, and acquiring no esteem by his personal presence in the country, since it was speedily discovered that he was a vain boaster, prodigal of foolish promises, and less warlike than he pretended

to be, he had been anxious to recommend himself to the Swedes by means of a brilliant acquisition which should flatter their patriotism. The Swedes, indeed, although much distressed at the loss of Finland, nevertheless perceived that this province so necessary to Russia, must be the constant object of its desires and its efforts, and that the truest frontier for the two countries being, therefore, the gulf of Bothnia, (with the exception of the Aland islands, these being indispensable, especially in winter, to the safety of Stockholm), the acquisition of Norway should be the recompense sought for the territory they had lost. But although Napoleon could easily promise the gift of Finland in the event of his war with Russia having a successful issue, it would have been a flagrant treason against his faithful ally Denmark to have hesitated a moment with respect to Norway. His significant silence had made the Prince Royal aware of his sentiments on this subject, and he had from that moment abandoned himself to a spirit of hatred against Napoleon, which had long lurked at the bottom of his heart. The reigning king, enfeebled by age and bad health, had entrusted to him the administration, at least for the time being. Bernadotte had taken advantage of this to favour the Russian and English party, whilst he still ostensibly adhered to the interests of France to which he owed his election. But whilst refraining from declaring himself hostile to France, he took every occasion of declaring himself entirely devoted to Sweden, of expressing his readiness to die for her; and of repeating that Sweden was under no obligation to be faithful to any allies save those who revered and preserved her interests. Whilst holding this language in public he favoured more than ever the contraband commerce, secretly intimating to the English that they might resort to the environs of Gottenburg, notwithstanding the apparent existence of war, and hinted to the Russian Legation that, although the loss of Finland was very grievous to Swedish pride, what was lost was lost, and that it hoped to obtain compensation for the loss in a different quarter. He had, moreover, maintained in full force the order given to the Swedish marine to repress our corsairs, and openly to protect the soldiers who maltreated, even to the shedding of blood, our sailors at Stralsund.

Alquier was our minister at Stockholm, and as he had had the misfortune of being at Madrid a little before the fall of Charles IV., and at home at the moment of the seizure of Pius VII., he had been very unjustly accused of being wherever he appeared, the sinister precursor of Napoleon's designs. All that he can be justly reproached with, being the possession of a



considerable power of foresight and a coldness of demeanour which is sometimes dangerous in delicate situations. It was to him that the new prince of Sweden had to explain himself, and an interview took place between them, the account of which would appear incredible, were not M. Alquier, who reported it to Napoleon, a witness worthy of entire confidence. After useless and insincere explanations respecting the English establishment at Gottenberg, the failure of performance of the principal clauses of the last treaty, and the French blood spilled at Stralsund, General Bernadotte insolently demanded of M. Alquier how it was that France, which he had served so well, and which was under such great obligations to him, should treat him so ill, even to the extent of endeavouring to injure him at Constantinople, Stralsund, and Stockholm, by means of its agents. To these strange words, which he could scarcely believe that he had heard aright, M. Alquier replied that if France were under obligations to the new Prince Royal it had repaid them by raising him to the throne of Sweden.

Doubtless, if it had been possible to foresee the course of future events, it would have been judicious to treat this mad pride with caution; but when we consider the state of existing circumstances we may easily understand the indignation which it excited in the mind of the French minister; and it cannot but be admitted that there are some things which even the fear of instant death ought not to induce us to endure. Bernadotte was anxious that the particulars of this interview, in which he had displayed a spirit of feverish and even mad presumption, should not be transmitted to Napoleon, but nevertheless, he could not refrain from carrying his boastful demeanour to the extent of saying to M. Alquier, "I particularly beg of you to inform Napoleon of what you have just heard!"—"As you wish it, I will do so," replied M. Alquier, and immediately retired. It was easy to understand that the above request, proceeding from so insincere a man as the Prince Royal, had a meaning precisely contrary to its ostensible signification, but M. Alquier, who would have done his master good service by keeping silence respecting this conversation, did not dare to fail in the exact performance of the duty of his office, and transmitted full particulars of it to Paris. Napoleon, who was far from foreseeing the cruel punishments which Providence had in store for him, perused his minister's portentous narrative with a smile of pity, declaring that he had long since perceived the enemy gnawing at Bernadotte's heart, long since believed him capable of the blackest treason, and that he regarded this expression of his true character as worthy only of utter disdain. He ordered M. Alquier to quit Stockholm

for Copenhagen without giving any explanation and without taking leave of the Prince Royal. He directed M. de Cabre, Secretary to the Embassy, to assume its direction, at the same time refraining from visiting the Prince Royal or holding any communications save with the Swedish ministers, and with them only in matters of necessity. At the same time he intimated to the Swedish representative at Paris, that if satisfaction were not granted to France, especially with regard to Stralsund, the treaty of peace with Sweden would be considered null.

During the journey he was now taking Napoleon had, also, to give various orders relative to ecclesiastical affairs.

The deputation of Prelates and Cardinals sent to Savoy had found Pius VII. gentle and benevolent as usual, although agitated by the serious posture of affairs, and it had but little difficulty in persuading him that the decree of the Council was satisfactory. This decree, as the reader must remember, obliged the Pope to institute nominated bishops within six months from the time of their nomination, and authorized the metropolitan to grant it in case he should neglect the performance of this duty within the stipulated time. Pius VII., favourably impressed by the reference made by the Council to his authority, which he regarded as an acknowledgement of the rights of the Holy See, yielded to the solicitations of the Holy See, adopted the new decree, and promised to institute without delay the twenty-seven new Prelates. This result having been obtained the Cardinals and Prelates departed, leaving the Pope more calm and more disposed to a reconciliation with the Emperor, and flattering themselves that in return for the concessions they had induced him to make they should obtain for the Pontiff a lot less hard and more worthy of his station.

Information of what had taken place at Savoy reached Napoleon whilst on his journey in Holland, and the important affairs of the church were amongst those on which he had to determine during its progress. It is somewhat singular, that the dispute with the Pope caused him almost as much anxiety as the war in Spain.

In the one case as in the other he found a resistance in the nature of circumstances against which he found the assaults of the sword to be perfectly futile, and with respect to which, indeed, truth and time, that is to say, reason and constancy, are alone of any avail. At the same time he believed that he had discovered a means of uniting all these troublesome matters into one head, which he would utterly destroy by completely subduing Russia in the ensuing war. Indulging in this idea he considered that when he had once

vanquished Russia he would triumph over every kind of resistance, either material or moral, which the earth could oppose to him; the commercial resistance of traders, the patriotic resistance of Spaniards, the religious resistance of the clergy, and, so to speak, the common feelings of humanity. He demanded, therefore, that his attention should be left undisturbed by anything save the one great affair, the war with Russia; and when in the midst of his journey in Holland despatches came from the Minister of Worship calling his attention to a new phase of the religious quarrel, he was excessively annoyed, and replied rather by a cry of impatience than by an answer.

The acceptance of the decree of the Council pleased him to a certain degree, but he was more gratified by the promise given by the Pope to institute the twenty-seven new bishops, for by this means the interrupted administration of the church would be re-established. The letter which accompanied and explained these concessions, however, displeased him much, for its sentiments were opposed to the doctrines of Bossuet; and Napoleon, who was averse to the existence of liberty in any quarter in which he could himself domineer, wished it to prevail wherever it would not be in antagonism with his own power; this latter case was that of the church, and Napoleon was therefore an ardent disciple of Bossuet. This being the case Napoleon resolved to accept the effective part of the pontifical letter whilst he rejected the motives on which it was based; and determined to submit to the Council of state the decree of the Council to which the Pope had assented, in order that the decree might be placed au bulletin des lois. As for the letter itself, Napoleon ordered it to be referred to a committee of the Council of State, that its conformity with the doctrines of the Gallican church might be examined, and that as much delay might be caused by the examination as was convenient. With regard to the twenty-seven new prelates he directed all steps necessary to their canonical institution to be taken as soon as possible, and that the performance of this ceremony should be immediately demanded and obtained from the Pope; but that the Prelates then residing at Paris awaiting the Pope's decision should be straightway dismissed.

These measures having been taken Napoleon continued his journey, concluded the inspection of the troops and material which were being forwarded from the Rhine to the Elbe, and then returned to Paris, which he reached at the beginning of November. Other important matters awaited him there. Prussia and Sweden had replied to his imperious summons. The former, offered the alternative of either suspending her



armaments or having Marshal Davoust march immediately upon Berlin, had submitted. The solemn promise given by Napoleon had in some degree reassured the King of Prussia, and he had only demanded the immediate discussion of the terms of the treaty of alliance, which was to guarantee to him immediate possession of his states and an increased territory on the conclusion of peace. Napoleon consented to open this negotiation, but directed that it should be protracted, in order that Russia, who believed war to be certain, might not suppose that it would be immediate.

The order sent to M. Alquier to depart for Copenhagen terrified the Prince Royal of Sweden, who was only brave in outward show, and he declared that M. Alquier, in the habit of embroiling his government with every cabinet with which he held communications, had misrepresented the interview which had taken place between them. The fact was, however, that M. Alquier had reported nothing but the exact truth. In the meantime the reigning King being very unwilling that the misunderstanding with France should be still further increased, reassumed the direction of affairs. But although the hatred of the Prince Royal was henceforth less apparent, it was by no means less dangerous; he commenced from this moment to forward the reconciliation of England with Russia; and when forced to give some explanation to those who had assisted to elect him simply on account of their inclinations in favour of France, he declared that the misunderstanding which had so unfortunately arisen was simply the result of a misfortune under which he laboured, which he now found himself compelled to avow, and which was no less than the having inspired Napoleon with a furious jealousy.

We may well understand with what disdain Napoleon would have listened to such folly as this. He again recommended a complete avoidance of any relations with the Prince Royal, and the moderate but persevering continuance of the demands of France relative to the contraband traffic, and the injuries inflicted on the French sailors.

As soon as he had re-entered Paris Napoleon directed his ministers to examine carefully all the affairs of the administration of the country which were capable of being permanently arranged, in order that nothing might be left unsettled in the spring when he should depart for Russia; and continued to give his most sedulous attention to his military preparations; and so powerful was his system of government that it was equally effectual either in the arrangement of domestic policy or military armament. But unfortunately, however great or magnificent may be a man's genius, the



method of the universe is stronger than he, and is capable of baffling all his plans.

Before following Napoleon into the gulf into which he was now about to plunge, it is necessary to retrace the last series of events in Spain, the importance of which, in themselves as well as in relation to the great system of affairs at the period, was far from being slight. The recital of these events will form the subject of the following book.

## BOOK XLII.

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### TARRAGONE.

EVENTS in the Peninsula—Return of Joseph to Madrid, and the state of affairs to which he returned—State of Spain, weariness of the public mind, and possibility of its submitting to assist Joseph with money and men—Critical situation of Badajoz since the battle of Albuera—Eagerness of Marshal Marmont, the successor of Masséna, to proceed to the relief of this fortress—His march, junction with Marshal Soult, and relief of Badajoz after a courageous resistance on the part of its garrison—The union of these two Marshals followed by an almost immediate separation—Marshal Soult goes to repress the insurgent bands of Andalusia, and Marshal Marmont takes up a position on the Tagus in such a manner as to be able to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo or Badajoz according to circumstances—Lord Wellington, after having failed before Badajoz is forced, by the prevalence of sickness, to take up summer quarters, but he prepares to be able to attack Badajoz or Ciudad Rodrigo at the first false movement of the French—Operations in Aragon and Catalonia—General Suchet, placed in command of lower Catalonia and a portion of the forces of this province, proceeds to besiege Tarragone—Memorable siege and capture of this important fortress—General Suchet raised to the dignity of Marshal—Recapture of Figuières, for a short period occupied by the Spaniards—Lord Wellington having made preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, and having approached it, Marshal Marmont quits the banks of the Tagus in September, and in conjunction with General Dorsenne, who had replaced Marshal Bessières in Castille, marches upon Ciudad Rodrigo and succeeds in revictualling it—Extreme peril of the English army—The two French Generals might, if they had been more united, have inflicted on it a severe check—Napoleon resolves to subdue Valencia before the winter—Departure of Marshal Suchet on the 15th September, and his march across the kingdom of Valencia—Resistance of Saguntum and vain attempts to carry this fortress by assault—General Blake, desiring to relieve Saguntum, offers battle to the French army—Victory of Saguntum—Capture of Saguntum—Marshal Suchet, although the conqueror, has not sufficient forces to enable him to take Valencia, and demands reinforcements—Napoleon dispatches to his aid all the available troops in Spain, under the Generals Caffarelli, Reille, and Montbrun—Investment and capture of Valencia on 9th of January,

1812—Lord Wellington, taking advantage of the concentration of all the available French troops around Valencia, hastens to invest Ciudad Rodrigo—He captures this fortress on the 19th of January, 1812, before Marshal Marmont is able to raise the siege—Unjust reproaches against Marshal Marmont—At this time Napoleon, instead of sending fresh troops to Spain, withdraws his guard, the Polish troops, half the dragoons, and a certain number of fourth battalions—He draws Marshal Marmont from the Tagus to the Douro, assigning to him the task of defending the north of the Peninsula against the English—Taking advantage of these circumstances Lord Wellington hastens to Badajoz, and takes it by assault on the 7th of April, 1812, in spite of the most heroic conduct on the part of the garrison—Napoleon, preparing to depart for Russia, makes Joseph Commander-in-Chief of all the armies of the Peninsula, but leaves him with insufficient and scattered forces—Résumé of the events in Spain during the years 1810 and 1811, and the first portion of 1812.

## BOOK XLII.

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WE have now reached a period when it is necessary to resume the narrative of the events in Spain succeeding the undecided battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, and the lost battle of Albuera, both of which took place in May, 1811. The army of Portugal, deprived of the only chief capable of leading it, the illustrious Masséna, was scattered about Salamanca in a state of misery, discontent, and disorganisation, difficult to describe. Marshal Marmont, an intelligent and sedulous general, had devoted to it the most earnest attention from the moment of his arrival; but the evacuation of Portugal, and the apparent impossibility of driving the English out of the Peninsula, increased the confidence and boldness of the insurgents, and the turbulence of the northern provinces, whilst aggravating the sufferings of our troops as well as of the inhabitants. In this state of affairs a new circumstance occurred to increase the general wretchedness.

On the 25th of May the celebrated Mina, successor of his nephew who was in detention at Vincennes, having succeeded in forming a band of three thousand men, which he skilfully transported by turns from Navarre to the Basque provinces, and from the Basque provinces to Navarre, had assailed a convoy consisting of a thousand Spanish prisoners and a hundred waggons filled with wounded French soldiers proceeding towards France, guarded by 400 fusileers of the new guard, and 150 men of the 28th *léger* and the 75th of the line. Colonel Dentzel, in command of the escort, had complained of its insufficient strength to General Caffarelli, but the latter had paid no attention to his remonstrances, and the convoy had set out from Vittoria for Bayonne. Mina, always possessed of accurate information, had concealed his forces in the woods on the right and left of the Tolosa road, and when the column of prisoners and wounded, more than



a league in length, had ascended the mountain which rises beyond Vittoria, and was in the midst of the defile of Salinas, he suddenly rushed upon it, released the Spanish prisoners, and cruelly slaughtered with their assistance our sick and wounded. In spite of the most heroic efforts the escort was unable either to retain possession of the prisoners or to save the wounded, and lost 150 of their own number in this fatal encounter; the only consolation for which is to be found in the fact that the Spanish prisoners, being situated between the cross fire of our troops and those of Mina, expiated by the slaughter of great numbers of them, the savage cruelty of their liberator.

On hearing the sound of the musketry, General Caffarelli advanced with the reinforcements to attack Mina in his turn; but he only arrived to find the Spanish prisoners liberated, the sick and wounded slain, and Mina escaped; and instead of blaming himself, and himself alone, he blamed the brave men who had been engaged in this desperate struggle. And yet General Caffarelli was an honourable man, worthy of his illustrious brother. But this was a fresh example, amongst a thousand others, of the grievous state of confusion into which all things had fallen in Spain.

At Madrid the absence of the King, of whose return there could be little expectation, the wretchedness of the working classes, the dearness of provisions, which were seized by the roving insurgent bands even at the very gates of the capital, the fatigue, destitution, and dispersion of the army of the centre, which was exhausted in marching from Guadalaxara to Talavera, from Segovia to Toledo, without succeeding in keeping open the communications, carried discouragement and despair into the very heart of the kingdom.

In Estremadura and Andalusia affairs were no better. After the battle of Albuera, fought for the purpose of saving Badajoz, Marshal Soult had retreated to Llerena, and had established himself on the slope of the mountains which separate Estremadura from Andalusia. From these heights he overawed the English by his presence, and afforded to the besieged fortress the best moral support it was in his power to give, and urgently and reasonably demanded that succour should be sent to him. For if the aid he demanded did not arrive, if the army of Portugal did not descend promptly upon the Guadiana, in spite of the difficulties that the heat opposed to the march of troops, Badajoz must fall, and the powerful army of Andalusia which had set out from Madrid the preceding year amounting to 80,000 men, but now, alas! very greatly reduced, would find itself deprived of a trophy which was the only reward it had obtained for all its sufferings and courage.

In Andalusia the state of affairs, although less deplorable was still extremely unsatisfactory. The siege of Cadiz, which should have been the only occupation of the army of Andalusia, whilst the conquest of Badajoz, devised by Marshal Soult as a means of avoiding entering Portugal, had but served to divide his forces and expose him to useless dangers, had made no progress. Marshal Victor, his troops having been reduced to 12,000 effective men, and scarcely sufficing to guard his lines, remained before the Isle of Leon with the flotilla he had created and the great mortars he had founded, without sailors for the former or material for the latter. Depressed and discontented at the part which Marshal Soult had compelled him to play he demanded, as the only reward for his services to the Empire, that he should be immediately recalled. In the meantime the insurgents of La Ronda had been no less troublesome to General Sebastiani, who was constantly occupied in making head at Grenada against the English on one side and against the troops of Murcia and Valencia on the other. But although a man of great wisdom and moderation he was denounced by Marshal Soult as being unequal to the government of Grenada, which however he ruled more successfully than the Marshal had ruled Andalusia, and he solicited his recall as earnestly as the Duke de Bellune.

One province and one army alone, as we have already said, presented a satisfactory aspect; namely, the province and the army of Aragon, under the command of General Suchet. This General was able and he was also fortunate, being one of those men to whom a certain degree of talent seems to attract success. He had successfully taken Lerida, Mequinenza, Tortosa, and established order and regular government throughout his province, which was additionally fortunate in being neither traversed by the French armies, forming no portion of their road, nor threatened by the English, not being their object. This portion of the country was therefore almost happy in the midst of the frightful convulsions which agitated Spain, and almost loved its conqueror in the midst of the universal hatred towards the French.

It was on the frontier of his government that General Suchet met with the most serious difficulties; Villa Campa, in the direction of Calatayud, l'Empecinado towards Guadalaxara, Mina in Navarre, and the banditti on the border of Catalonia, never ceasing to give occasion for the exertions of his troops. But this fortunate General was in command of officers and troops worthy of himself, and the conquest of these bands was but a matter of detail.

In Catalonia, on the other hand, all was disorder. The

banditti, supported and encouraged by the Spanish army of Catalonia, which held its base at Tarragone, filled it with desolation, and there was not a defile beside which they did not await to attack convoys whose escorts were too feeble, to release their prisoners, to slaughter the sick and wounded, and to seize the provisions which were being conveyed to the various fortresses, and especially Barcelona. Whilst the banditti rendered the roads of the interior impassable, the English flotillas rendered as dangerous the routes which bordered the coast. In Barcelona the garrison and inhabitants were equally in want of provisions, although a whole army, that of Marshal Macdonald, was devoted to the purpose of revictualling it, and many naval expeditions were adventured with the same object; for, in general only a fourth part of the stores sent reached their destination. General Maurice - Mathieu, who was the governor of this place, displayed as much skill as firmness in maintaining his position, and overawing the inhabitants without driving them to despair. But he wrote that it would be impossible to keep in check for any considerable time longer so numerous a population.

The Catalan army, finding at Tarragone a solid base, provisions and stores of all kinds furnished by the English navy, and a safe refuge in case of necessity, sometimes dared to venture from the sea coast on which Tarragone is situated even to the foot of the Pyrenees, and, to the great astonishment of every one introduced provisions into the fortress of Figueres, of which we had been deprived by treason. Taking advantage of the moment when the French, under General Baraguey d'Hilliers, had not as yet had time to collect sufficient troops in front of the fortress to commence the siege, M. de Campo-Verde had broken through our feeble line of blockade, and had introduced both men and provisions.

We have already said what was the situation of our officers and soldiers, who, enduring greater misery than they were capable of inflicting on the enemy, and sometimes excited to excesses much to be lamented, by the sight of the cruelties which they saw inflicted on their comrades, but at all times the least inhuman of any people who ever attacked or defended the Peninsula. The soldiers, if they could only obtain a little grain or a few cattle from the uncultivated and depopulated fields, and could make boots for themselves of the skins of the animals on which they had fed, were satisfied. The officers, on the other hand, habituated and obliged to live in a manner suited to their rank, endured cruel suffering both in body and mind. They were deprived, for instance, by the

want of pay of the means of obtaining shoes for their feet. Napoleon, allotting forty-eight millions a year for pay, and leaving to the country the burden of supplying provisions, believed that he had supplied all that was necessary. But the pay for the years 1810 and 1811 should have been more than 165 millions, or more than 80 millions a year instead of 48. Of the sums due he had sent 29 millions in 1810 and 48 in 1811, that is to say, 77 millions instead of 165. What remained unpaid had been torn from the country by the agency of the military governments. Of the 77 millions actually sent by Napoleon a portion had been plundered on the way, a portion devoted to necessary purchases, or indispensable repairs of the artillery, and a part still remained in certain depôts. The army of Andalusia had received scarcely anything, and since it was quartered in a rich country would have wanted for nothing, had Marshal Soult been as good an administrator as General Suchet. The army of Portugal, however, being condemned to serve in the stony districts of Portugal or Salamanca, had been in want of the simplest necessities; its officers presenting a pitiable sight, and having little hope of relief, since in the first place the Emperor was far away, and in the second they could present to him nothing but reverses. Where then, after the hopes conceived in 1810, after two years of fresh struggles, after the despatch of reinforcements to the amount of 200,000 men, after the sacrifice of so many soldiers and generals, and the compromise of so many illustrious reputations, of those of Masséna, Ney, Jourdan, Augereau, Soult, Victor, and Saint-Cyr, where was the conquest of Spain?

Was it the fact that this terrible country was really invincible, as asserted by an ancient tradition, and as its inhabitants delighted to believe? Excellent judges, who detested the Spanish war and had had opportunities of personal inspection, Saint-Cyr, Jourdan, and Joseph himself, did not believe this, and believed that increased resources, patience, and perseverance might still command success. Doubtless, great exertions had been already made, which would have been excessive for any object which was not so essential an one of the imperial policy, but until the end had been accomplished, the exertions which had been made were entirely ineffectual. The army of Portugal, for want of reinforcements to the extent of forty thousand men, and the supply of some millions for the purpose of procuring food and clothing, the army of Andalusia for want of twenty-five thousand additional troops, of sailors, of munitions, and a flotilla which was lying idle at Toulon; the court of Madrid for want of some millions for the payment of its employes; and



the armies of the North, for the want of twenty thousand men and some millions of money for the purpose of establishing magazines; were equally ineffectual and wretched. In fact, nearly four hundred thousand men were become useless for the want of a hundred thousand additional troops and a hundred millions of money. In all matters the greatest sacrifices are useless if they be not continued until the attainment of the desired object.

Doubtless if the hundred thousand additional troops which were required were to remain as useless as the 400,000 already sent, there would have been good reason to refrain from making this further sacrifice, but it was already easy to perceive in certain provinces, symptoms of a fatigue of which immediate advantage should have been taken. The feeling with which Spain had been excited had been violent, unanimous and legitimate; but nevertheless, after four years of war, at the spectacle of so much bloodshed and such wide spread ruin, it was impossible not to ask why and for whom so much evil was endured. A calm had to a certain extent succeeded to the first state of excitement, and left room for reflection, and in Saragossa, Madrid, Seville, and other large cities, men began to say that the princes for whom they fought were little worthy of the devotion they displayed towards them, and that the Spanish branch of the illustrious and august family of Bourbon having become utterly degenerate, deserved to be cut off; since the chief of the descendants of Philippe V., the honest and foolish Charles IV., lived at Marseilles as much the slave of the Prince de la Paix and his wife off the throne as on it; since his eldest son, a prisoner at Valençay, incessantly entreated the conqueror who had robbed him, to bestow upon him one of the princesses of the Bonaparte family, and was so much afraid of being compromised by the acts of those who endeavoured to set him free, that he denounced them to the police, and since, in the last place there was not one of the race, man or woman, who cared to extend a friendly hand to the heroic nation which poured out its blood in its cause. The Cortes of Cadiz, after having proclaimed some incontestable principles, but which were, nevertheless, very precocious for Spain, had only resulted in a species of anarchy, residing at Cadiz in a state of misery, discord, and perpetual disputes with the English. The Spaniards were well aware of these facts, and appreciated them at their true value as soon as the roar of the cannon was a moment absent from their ears. Joseph on the other hand was, in the eyes of all those who had opportunities of personally judging of his character, a gentle and enlightened Prince, a representative of the mod-

erate principles of the French revolution, and afforded good grounds for hope that his government would be one of wise reform. He was a new Prince, certainly, and it might be said that he was an usurper, imposed on the country by another usurper; but had it not always been an historical tradition in Spain that the regeneration of the country must be the work of foreign dynasties? Had not Philip V. revived the fortunes of Spain by replacing the degenerate descendants of Charles the fifth? And had not Charles the fifth himself, although the legitimate heir, been a foreign Prince, who took to Spain the brilliant civilization of Flanders when there remained there no better representative of Ferdinand and Isabella than Jeanne la Folle? Might not hopes be indulged in, then, that Joseph's reign would have similar good results? At Madrid, where the inhabitants had had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with him, he had been justly appreciated and the national animosity had almost died out as regarded him. In Aragon, where General Suchet was the representative of the new government, the population had learned to think favourably of it, and to say that, in the absence of war, it would be an hundred times better than the Prince of Peace and the Queen Marie-Louise. At the same time the incessant war, with its attendant wretchedness, and devastation, and the idea which was generally entertained that if Napoleon did not annex to his Empire the whole of Spain, he would at least seize the provinces of the Ebro, excited the enmity of even the most moderate of the Spanish population. And yet it was easy to perceive in Madrid and the surrounding districts that if Joseph had been able to recompense his various functionaries; to pay his troops, to furnish them with stores and equipments from regular magazines, instead of at the expense of the country; to maintain order and discipline as it was maintained in Aragon; to obtain from Napoleon and his Generals the respect due to the sovereign of any country, but indispensable in the case of the King of a nation so proud as that of Spain; and to dissipate the wide spread fear of the appropriation by Napoleon of the provinces of the Ebro; that some progress would have been made in reducing the country to submission.

The favourable feeling which began to arise in the capital, and which always displayed increased vigour when the state of affairs happened to be less sad than usual, showed symptoms from time to time of having spread to the other great towns; and it is a noteworthy fact that the Spanish troops, which at first had deserted as soon as enrolled in the service of the new king, began, either from weariness or from jealousy of the guerillas, to display fidelity, provided they

were duly paid. Even the guerillas themselves, who were mere bandits, desirous of nothing but pillage, began to be gradually attracted by the prospect of pay, and an amnesty having been accorded to a certain number in La Mancha, around Toledo, in the neighbourhood of Guadalaxara, they had submitted and enlisted in the King's service.

None of these favourable symptoms existed in the hotbeds of insurrection, where the popular passions were still energetic and obstinate, where the English excited and fostered every sentiment hostile to France, where hopes of success were still fervently entertained, and where especially pillage was excessively lucrative; but although the position of the French in the Peninsula was one of great difficulty; it is quite certain that the exhaustion of all classes of society, and especially of the peasant class, and the absence of any reasonable object to be obtained by the protraction of the struggle, (for the recovery of the Bourbons of Marseilles and Valençay certainly was not such an object), would have occasioned the submission of the Spaniards; had one last and powerful effort been made; had the English, above all things, been expelled; had the necessary forces for the attainment of this object been employed; had the capture, which was quite possible, of Lisbon and Cadiz been secured; had the Guerilla bands been suppressed, and the imitation of their ferocities been refrained from; had the reinforcements necessary for the attainment of these objects been supplied; and had not only these reinforcements been supplied, but the expences of their maintenance also, thus releasing the country of the greater part of the miseries of war; and finally, had there been added to these resources a power, impossible to be exercised from a distance, of general direction,—had, in fact, not a portion but almost the whole of the resources of the Empire, and the attention of the Emperor himself been devoted to Spain, it is almost certain that a successful result would have been obtained. A portion only of the preparations which had been made for the Russian war, would have sufficed for deciding in our favour the question which had been excited by the Spanish mission. Napoleon was wrong to make Spain the theatre on which was to be decided the great European question, but having once transferred it thither he should there have decided it.

When Joseph, driven to despair, had quitted Madrid to go to demand of Napoleon either the adoption of another method in the conduct of Spanish affairs, or permission to re-enter into private life, many honest persons at Madrid, Valladolid, Burgos, and Vittoria, had said to him:—see how much we have to endure, and judge for yourself whether it

will be possible to induce us to submit by such a régime as this! Our habitations are pillaged, and burnt, and ourselves assassinated by your soldiers and those who call themselves ours, and our lives and property are thus at the mercy of brigands of every nation. We can hope for no good from the anarchical government of Cadiz, or the corrupted government of Ferdinand, and we would willingly resign ourselves to obtain all that we need from your hands; but deprived, for ever, perhaps, of our colonies, we are now threatened with the loss of our provinces of the Ebro, and no disposition is displayed to render our submission honorable. You yourself are despised and publicly insulted at the moment when endeavours are being made to render you our King. How then can you expect us to submit? Your functionaries, treated with contumely by the French Generals, and almost dying with hunger, are reduced to the necessity of supporting themselves on soldiers' rations. How then can they command the least respect?

You go to Paris—report our words to the Emperor. Your departure is interpreted in two ways: by your enemies, as the signal that the veil of pretence is about to be laid aside and that Spain is speedily to be declared a French province, in the same way as Lubeck, Hamburg, Florence and Rome; by your friends, the number of whom is small, as a recourse to the superior genius of your brother, for the purpose of informing him of that of which he is ignorant, and perhaps for the purpose of inducing him to come hither and give his personal attention to the direction of affairs. You refrain from saying that the latter are right. Hasten to Paris, then, tell the truth, obtain reinforcements, and at the same time authority for yourself to act effectually, and for us a reassuring declaration with respect to the maintenance of the integrity of our territory. The moment is propitious, for in spite of your apparent reverses, in spite of the temporary successes of your opponents, there is a general weariness throughout the country which may speedily be converted into submission or despair;—despair which would be terrible to those who might have provoked it.

These words, proceeding from the mouths of men worthy of credit, had been reported at Paris by Joseph, who, having proceeded thither for the purpose of being present at the baptism of the King of Rome, had remained there during May, June, and July. But unfortunately Joseph was subject to certain weaknesses which, although very pardonable in themselves, prevented Napoleon from entrusting him with the necessary authority. He was, as we have before said, a good, honest, sensible man, but indolent, prone to pleasure,



expense, and the society of flatterers (and with regard to a fondness for flattery there is but little distinction between the characters of princes, whether ancient or modern), far too surely convinced of his possession of military talents, and very jealous of his authority. The existence of these defects in his character had thrown a certain degree of suspicion over his demands for more troops, more money, and the command-in-chief of the armies in the Peninsula, and had induced Napoleon to receive them so badly that the intervention of a third person became necessary to prevent the recurrence of unfortunate scenes between the two brothers. Prince Berthier had been selected as Major-General of the armies of Spain, and it would have been impossible to have selected a more judicious or discreet man, or one better informed on all points. Unfortunately he had not as much influence as talent, and if incapable of perverting the truth, was not, nevertheless, sufficiently courageous to declare it plainly. Moreover, Napoleon was at this moment exasperated against his brothers. Louis had but recently thrown at his feet the crown of Holland; Jerome, who had received Hanover in addition to Westphalia, on condition of supporting certain charges, had not fulfilled his engagements, and had been punished by the deprivation of a certain portion of Hanover, and Murat, a worthy but fickle and turbulent man, excited by his spirituelle and ambitious spouse, had bitterly displeased his brother by excessive extravagance and neglect of his navy, and was, moreover, accused by him of having under various pretexts held communications with the English along the coasts of his kingdom. Finally, we have already seen, how greatly Napoleon was irritated by the half treasons of Cardinal Fesch. The unfortunate Joseph arrived, therefore, very mal à propos for the purpose of declaring unpleasant truths. Napoleon had had him informed that if he were desirous of abdicating as Louis had he was perfectly at liberty to do so; that his brothers might at any time freely quit the thrones he had bestowed on them, that he was able to dispense with their services, and that the adoption of this conduct by them would even simplify the affairs of Europe, but that in the meantime they were not only Kings but also Generals under his orders, and that he would not suppose that they would desert their posts without informing him previously, and receiving his permission. Such was the first explosion of Napoleon's excitable temperament; and this having passed off the intervention of Prince Berthier had been the means of obtaining explanations somewhat calmer and more precise. Joseph had declared that it was essentially necessary that he should receive the respect due to him

as the brother of the Emperor, and King of Spain, and that the Generals should not be permitted to treat him, as they did, with contempt; he also asserted that the Generals were so much at variance with each other that there was danger of their sacrificing to their mutual jealousies the lives of their troops; and added, that if it were desired to bestow upon him suitable dignity, to re-establish unity of system in the conduct of the military operations, and to prevent excess and pillage, it was necessary to endow him with the supreme command, at the same time appointing as chief of his staff some Marshal worthy of confidence, and sending to him from Paris instructions to which he would scrupulously conform; leaving in the provinces only judicious and able lieutenant-generals. He also declared that it was a matter of no less urgency, if it were desired that the exasperation of the Spaniards against the French should subside, that the devastating system of nourishing war by war should be renounced, and that instead of endeavouring to obtain money from Spain money should be sent thither, to be repaid at a future time; and that if he, Joseph, were supplied with a subsidy of from three to four millions a month, he would have well paid and faithful functionaries; an army of Spanish troops entirely devoted to him, and more effectual than French troops for the suppression of the guerilla bands, a portion of whom, also, would be induced by the offer of pay to enlist in his service. That if it were preferred to convert this subsidy into a loan he would repay it within a few years, and would give a thousand French troops in exchange for each million advanced. And if, he said, the army were well paid and supported, and employed in the pursuit of the English army, and if Spain were assured that she would not be deprived of the provinces of the Ebro, a condition of calm peace would spread around Madrid, and would thence extend to the provinces, so that before long, Spain, being in a state of complete submission, would restore to France her armies and her treasures, and a second time be governed, to the advantage of both nations, by the policy of Louis XIV. But if on the contrary, he concluded, the existing system were persisted in, Spain would then become the tomb of Napoleon's armies, the confusion of his policy, and probably the source of his own fall and the ruin of his family.

All these allegations were true with the exception of a few trifling errors, which, however, served Napoleon as a pretext for the refusal of the most well founded demands. That the moment was a favourable one for the subjection of exhausted Spain, and that if the English were once expelled this subjection would not be long delayed, was suf-

ficiently evident from what had taken place in Aragon and even around Madrid. That the use of a few millions of money would render possible the creation of a devoted administrative service, and a faithful Spanish army, which would be of effectual service as a police for the interior, might fairly be expected from what had taken place at Madrid; that, without supplying the place of Napoleon himself, which would have been difficult, the appointment of a firm and able chief of the staff, such as General Suchet, for example, endowing him with absolute authority over all the Generals, and placing at his disposal sufficient troops and money, would be the means of attaining the conquest of Cadiz, and the pacification of Spain, was evident from the conquest of Tarragone and the pacification of Valencia. And there could be no doubt that, by entrusting to Masséna, with the aid of a hundred thousand men and sufficient means of transport, the expulsion of the English, the united genius of Suchet and Masséna would bring to a conclusion this cruel war, which, if ill conducted, might easily be the gulf in which would be lost both the fortunes of Napoleon and of France. But it was an error of Joseph's to suppose that he did not need thousands of men as well as millions of money; it was an illusion to suppose that he was capable of commanding, and that it was only necessary to appoint some complaisant courtier chief of the staff, for there was need of a real General commanding in chief, of such a man as General Suchet, who was a talented warrior, an able governor, and a conciliatory politician.

Whilst there was much truth, therefore, there was some error in the system propounded by Joseph, and this was sufficient to excite Napoleon's pitiless raileries against his brother's pretensions. To be a General, he said, required something more than mere ability to sit a horse, and to give some signs of command. To be a General, a man should unite to profound intelligence, a decided character, great powers of application, and a habit of paying constant attention to the least details. For his own part, Napoleon continued, he had the statements respecting his troops always on his table, and they formed his favourite reading; he carried them to bed with him and read them when he could not sleep; and that it was by virtue of this natural aptitude of spirit and character, of his incessant application, and immense experience, that he was able to command and to ensure obedience, since his soldiers placed in him implicit confidence; but that as far as Joseph was concerned God had not made him a General; that he was by nature gentle, spirituel, and indolent; that pleasures were necessary to him and too much work injurious; that men were in the habit of instinctively

detecting this sort of disposition, and would laugh at the idea of being commanded by such a general, whilst jealousy would induce them equally to decline to obey the officer appointed to advise him. For these reasons, he said, Joseph could not be entrusted with any larger command than that of the army of the centre. As for the demand for money he declared that he had none, and complained that his brothers, although ruling the richest countries in Europe, were perpetually demanding it of him. Spain, he said, contained sufficient for the supply of the whole world, and if Joseph knew how to govern he would be able to procure the necessary funds for the purposes of administration as he had already procured funds for gifts to his favourites, for the erection of royal residences, and the maintenance of a species of luxury which was out of place in the present situation of his affairs. With respect to the sufferings endured by Spain, he said that they were misfortunes for which there was no remedy, that the French soldiers suffered equally; that war was war, and that the Spaniards must patiently submit to inevitable evils. He laughed at Joseph's pretensions to the possession of the art of fascinating populations, and at his hopes of performing with millions of money what could only be done with thousands of men; declaring that the turbulence which existed in Spain could only be quelled by numbers of troops and the exercise of great vigour, and that when terror had once produced submission, that benign system of government which all nations had a right to expect might succeed.

In adopting a tone of ridicule in reply to Joseph's demands Napoleon did not behave with good faith, for he was far too clear sighted not to perceive to what extent they were well founded; but he could not change his system or devote to the war in Spain what he had destined for the war in Russia; and he was anxious, therefore, to continue the war in Spain with only the same resources, trusting that in any case success on the Borysthène would compensate for any want of it on the Tagus; a calamitous idea arising partly from comparative ignorance of the distant places respecting which he calculated, and partly from the giddiness of over prosperity.

This being the state of affairs, the journey undertaken by Joseph for the purpose of persuading Napoleon to alter his system with respect to Spain could have no result, or at least could but effect some slight changes in it of no real value. When the first explosion of his irritation had passed away Napoleon, whose severity only lasted for the moment, and who moreover was sincerely attached to his brothers, granted cer-



tain changes, which were rather formal than real. Joseph was still confined to the command of the army of the centre, but was to exercise over all the provinces civil, judicial, and political authority. The Generals were directed to respect him as a King and the Sovereign of a country of which the provinces were temporarily occupied in accordance with the necessities of the war, and if, which was very improbable, Joseph should ever be tempted to join one of the armies of the Peninsula it was to be immediately given up to him. Moreover, recognising the utility of increasing his influence over the provinces of the north, across which passed the line of communication with France, and where a large portion of the population was thoroughly wearied and disposed to submit, Napoleon offered to Joseph to replace Marshal Bessières, Duke of Istria, by Marshal Jourdan. The difficulty would be to induce the latter to return to Spain, and to accept office from Napoleon, between whom and himself there existed a mutual dislike, and to whose want of moderation he was especially adverse.

With respect to his finances, Joseph actually needed four millions a month for even the moderate support of his various functionaries in the capital and the central provinces, his household expenses, and the Spanish guard; of these necessary four millions, however, he had obtained but one, having been reduced, for his whole revenue, to the *octrois* of Madrid. This being the case, Napoleon consented to grant him a subsidy of a million a month, and to give up to him a fourth part of the contributions levied by all the Generals in all the provinces of Spain; by which it seemed probable that the four millions would be completed. But what chance was there that the Generals, leaving their troops unpaid and having the greatest trouble to obtain means of carriage from one part of the country to another, would take out millions from their chests for the purpose of sending them across Spain? General Suchet, indeed, might do this, although he had resolved, after having provided for the maintenance of his troops, to devote all the surplus revenue to the necessities of the country, and, in fact, as we shall see, he did do it; but he was the only one who had either the will or the power.

With respect to the serious question of the territorial integrity of Spain, Napoleon held the most evasive language; declaring to Joseph that he was very desirous of leaving him in possession of his kingdom in its existing proportions, but that it was necessary, for the purpose of intimidating the Spaniards, to inspire them with the fear of losing some of their provinces if they still obstinately resisted; and that, indeed, if the war were much longer protracted, and became

the source of much more expense, France would require some indemnity for her sacrifices. He advised, therefore, that the Spaniards should be rather terrified than reassured on this point. In the meantime, being unwilling to have a fresh family quarrel which would end, as was the case with the King of Holland, with the abdication of the King of Spain, Napoleon endeavoured to soothe his brother's anxieties, to encourage him, and inspire him with hopes; declaring to him that he was sending a large reserve force to the Peninsula, and that Suchet, after having taken Lerida, Mequinenza, and Tortosa, would capture Tarragone and Valencia; that when this conquest had been achieved, there would be an army which might be directed to the South; that the army of Andalusia would then be able to assist the army of Portugal, the organisation of which was actually proceeding; and that the reserves which were at that moment crossing the Pyrenees would recommence in the autumn a campaign against the English, which would probably be more fortunate than the preceding one; that the submission of the Peninsula would thus, within a short time, be attained, when the military commands would cease of themselves, and Joseph would resume the full exercise of his royal authority. Strange and terrible delusions these, which Napoleon doubtless shared to some extent, but to a less degree than he asserted, for in his ideas Spain was now but of secondary importance, and all that went wrong in the South was to be compensated for by success in the North.

Joseph, although disgusted at his sovereignty, which presented to his eyes nothing but spectacles of misery, was nevertheless anxious to avoid a family quarrel, which must result to Napoleon in the desertion of another of his brothers, and to himself in a relapse into private life, contented himself with these empty promises, and departed for Spain, less miserably anxious than he had arrived, but little encouraged by Napoleon's vague declarations.

Traversing Vittoria, Burgos, and Valladolid, he found the inhabitants still more wretched than they had been on his departure, and he could only console them by repeating the empty promises which had been made to himself, and to avoid importunate questioning hastened to Madrid, where everything had become worse since his departure. The only real advantage he had obtained by his mission to Paris had been the promise of the receipt of a million a month from Paris. Two of these millions were due; the first of which had been expended in Joseph's journey and residence at Paris, whilst the second was to come with the military convoys, and had not yet arrived. The grant of a fourth

part of the contributions levied on the country by the military governors had no effectual result, and Joseph was again reduced to the octrois of Madrid, and fell into a state of greater poverty. Also, during his absence neither the members of the Royal household nor the Spanish guard, nor any of the functionaries had received a piastre. To add to the general misery a terrible drought had rendered the harvest so bad all over the continent that the price of provisions had risen to an extravagant height; and Joseph only returned to his capital to be present at a scene of the greatest wretchedness. He again transmitted his complaints to Paris couched in terms even bitterer than those of the letters written previously to his journey. But Napoleon, fully occupied with his one great object, paid no attention to them; and the reserve which had been withdrawn from Italy, and which was actually on its way towards the Pyrenees, was the only succour which he had troubled himself to send to Spain.

This being the state of affairs it would have been best to have employed this reserve in consolidating the position of the French, and forming, by uniting it with the army of Portugal, a body capable of keeping the English in check, of disputing with them either Badajoz or Ciudad Rodrigo, and of preventing them from making any progress in the Peninsula until Napoleon should have settled in the North all those questions which he had resolved should there be determined. The fatal Andalusian expedition, which probably Marshal Soult had intended should atone for that of Oporto, and by means of which Joseph had proposed to extend his royal authority over a new country, and which had caused us to fail at Cadiz and Lisbon, for the sake of Badajoz, the conquest of which decided nothing, and which had caused us to neglect the principal object of this war by uselessly dispersing 80,000 men who would have sufficed for the expulsion of the English;—this deplorable expedition, we say, should have served as a lesson, and if a retreat were not made from Andalusia upon La Mancha, which would certainly have been the wisest course to pursue, whilst Napoleon was in the North, it would have only been commonly prudent to have paused at the borders of the conquered country, and to have then taken up a solid position. General Suchet would there have been able to keep possession of Aragon, and even to capture Tarragone, whence the Catalan insurrectionists drew their resources; Marshal Soult would have been able, without the capture of Cadiz, to guard Andalusia; and finally, the army of Portugal, reinforced by the reserve which had arrived, would have been in a condition to follow all the movements of Lord Wellington upon

Ciudad Rodrigo or Badajoz, in order to frustrate them. But Napoleon, judging of the state of affairs from a distance, and imagining that they were as he desired they should be, believing that Joseph had but demanded money for his own extravagant purposes, and that the Generals demanded reinforcements only in accordance with their habit of requiring more troops than they needed, was persuaded that by granting a portion of the reserve to General Suchet he would be able, Tarragone once taken, to subdue Valencia, and that when Valencia had been vanquished it would be easy for him to advance towards Grenada; that Marshal Soult, being thus set free on that side, would be able to advance towards Estremadura, and that joining the army of Portugal, then reinforced by the reserve, he would be able in conjunction with it to hurl back the English towards Lisbon. As, moreover, he did not intend to recall the guard and the Polish troops before winter, and the reserve, he calculated, would arrive at the end of the summer, he considered that there would be time during the autumn to make great progress in the affairs of Spain, and to conquer almost the whole of the Peninsula, with the exception of Portugal, before that he himself should have set out for the North. Such were the fresh illusions on which he founded his plan of operations for the close of the year 1811.

But in the meantime, whilst the reserve was still to arrive, and Tarragone still to be captured by General Suchet, Marshal Soult, posted at Llerena, within sight of Badajoz, demanded to be aided in his attempt to save this place which, in spite of its heroic resistance, was on the eve of surrender. Marshal Marmont, a generous companion in arms, and eager to distinguish himself at the head of the army of Portugal, spared no pains in his preparations to fly to the succour of Badajoz. Although Napoleon had recommended him to undertake nothing until his troops should have had some repose, should be properly equipped, and provided with horses, he did not hesitate to commence his march as soon as their most urgent necessities had been supplied. Well knowing that in conjunction with Marshal Soult his army must be numerically strong, he was more careful with respect to the quality than the number of the troops which he took with him, selecting from the 40,000 men, which were all that remained to him after the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, 30,000 effective troops, of whom 3000 were cavalry. The artillery he took with him, only amounted to thirty-six pieces of cannon; a small number, but as many as circumstances permitted him to employ. After having in some degree restored the discipline and physical vigour of his troops by a month



of repose and liberal rations, he resolved to comply with the urgent entreaties of Marshal Soult, and to execute a movement upon Estremadura, descending by the col de Banos upon the Tagus, crossing this river at Almaraz, and advancing by Truxillo upon the Guadiana. Foreseeing the difficulty he would have in obtaining subsistence for his troops in the very impoverished valley of the Tagus, especially in the month of June, he required of Joseph's commissariat that it should send him by the Tagus to Almaraz three or four hundred thousand rations of biscuit; together with a pontoon equipage which he knew to be at Madrid, that the passage of the river might not be a cause of delay.

All these precautions having been taken he had recourse to a feint for the purpose of deceiving the English, and retaining them before Ciudad-Rodrigo whilst he marched upon Badajoz. With this intention he had stores prepared as though his sole intention were to revictual Ciudad-Rodrigo, and proceeded thither on the 5th of June with his advanced guard, and a portion of his army, whilst Reynier with the remainder of the army in two divisions, passed the col de Banos, descended upon the Tagus, and with the matériel which had come from Madrid, made preparations for effecting the passage of the river at Almaraz. General Spencer, who remained on the Agueda with some English and Portuguese troops in the absence of Lord Wellington, who had led three divisions under the walls of Badajoz, was unable to make head against the French army, and did not even attempt it. He fell back before General Marmont's advanced posts, and the latter was able to communicate without difficulty with Ciudad-Rodrigo, and to throw into it the stores which he had brought with him. This operation having been successfully accomplished, the Marshal promptly retraced his steps, and rejoined Reynier upon the Tagus, without attending to the objections of Marshal Bessières, who declared this movement of the army of Portugal premature, and even a source of much danger to the north of the Peninsula, whilst no considerable portion of the reserve had yet entered Castille. Marshal Marmont, nevertheless, persisted in his resolution, and continued his march towards Estremadura.

It was time that he should appear before Badajoz, for it was certain that it must surrender, if not speedily relieved. Marshal Soult, although joined by General Drouet with the ninth corps, which had been ordered to throw itself into Estremadura after the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, having still no more than 25,000 effective troops, did not dare to hazard a battle with the English army, which numbered 40,000

men, since the arrival of Lord Wellington with three divisions. He could not even inform the besieged garrison, so closely were they blockaded, that he had come to their aid; but the former resolved to perish with arms in his hands, and to yield neither to threats of assault nor to assaults themselves, had determined rather to bury themselves under the ruins of the fortress than surrender it. There is indeed no example in the whole history of sieges, a species of warfare so fertile in the case of Frenchmen in illustrious facts, which surpasses the defence made by the garrison of Badajoz during the months of April, May and June, of the year 1811.

After having sustained a first siege from the 22nd April to the 16th of May, the date of the battle of Albuera, and having during all that time checked by a superior fire the approaches of the enemy, who had lost a thousand men without succeeding in effecting a breach; and after having been again invested after the battle of Albuera, without having received a single additional man or sack of wheat, this brave garrison had been, from the 20th of May, besieged by an army of 40,000 men.

The English had not been wanting, on their side, in making efforts for its capture, and had directed them in the east against the castle and in the north against the fort of St. Christoval, situated on the right bank of the Guadiana. The waters of the Ravillas, retained by a bar, had become a powerful means of defence for the castle; but unhappily it was built upon a projecting tongue of land, and exposed its sides to the English artillery, which, continually attacking it with no less than twenty pieces of cannon, had completely demolished its high towers and exterior bastions. The terres however, being of great thickness in this part, had preserved their escarpment, and the garrison by clearing the foot of the breaches under an incessant fire of grape, grenades, and howitzers, had rendered them impracticable. Besides this, Lamare, the governor, had raised an interior entrenchment behind the breach, flanking it with cannons, loaded with grape; and General Philippon, posted at the spot with the best troops, prepared to receive the assailants at the point of the bayonet. These preparations having become known to the English they had changed their plan of operations, and directed all the fury of their attack against the fort of St. Christoval, on the other side of the Guadiana, and having made two breaches in the right bastion, had resolved to carry them by assault before even having carried their approaches to the edge of the fosse. Five hundred infantry, with some artillerymen and engineers defended the threatened bastion, under Captain Chauoin of the 88th; and the besieged did

not fail to clear, as they had at the castle, the foot of the walls under the enemy's fire, and had, moreover, strewed the bottom of the ditch with obstacles of all kinds, disposed a line of bombs at the summit of the breach, and placed cannon loaded with grape on the flanks, and a line of grenadiers provided with three muskets each, in the rear. On the night of the 6th of June seven or eight hundred English bravely leaving their trenches, and advancing openly some hundreds of metres, arrived at the edge of the fosse, and were compelled to jump in, the counterscarp not having been demolished, and had then attempted to scale the breach. But the fire of musketry receiving them in front, the grape shot of the cannon taking them in flank, and the bombs rolling down upon their legs, they had been compelled to retreat, leaving three hundred killed or wounded in the fosses of fort St. Christoval.

The brave garrison, which had in this affair but five or six of their number wounded, was filled with enthusiasm and only desired the repetition of such attacks; whilst the population, suffering cruelly from the fire of the English, and almost desiring the success of the French, as a means of saving them from the horrors of an assault, were also inspired with feelings of great admiration. The English, confused and irritated, had avenged themselves during the following days by overwhelming the unfortunate city with murderous projectiles, and attempted to enlarge by powerful reinforcements of artillery the breaches of fort Saint Christoval. On the 19th of June they made a new and equally bold attempt to carry the two breaches. 200 men of the 21st under Captain Joudiou and the sergeant of artillery Brette, defended them, and had taken the same precaution to render the enemy's success almost impossible. In the midst of the night the English threw themselves from their trenches into the fosses and escaladed the ruins of the walls; but our grenadiers, overwhelming them with discharges of musketry at the foot of the breaches and then rushing upon them with the bayonet, drove them back from this second unsuccessful attempt with frightful carnage.

There was now no kind of danger capable of intimidating this brave garrison; but unfortunately provisions began to fail, and there was fear that, worn out as it was with fatigue and privations, it would be compelled to yield to want although not to the assaults of the enemy. But the approach of an army of relief, although unknown to the defenders of the fortress, was known by Lord Wellington, who was always informed of our movements, and on the 10th of June, having received information of the march of General

Reynier upon the Tagus, the English General determined to raise the siege and began to withdraw his troops; the chief reason for this determination being that the munitions of war collected at Elvas had been exhausted, and that it was necessary without loss of time to employ all the available means of transport for the purpose of obtaining more from Abrantès, the principal depôt of the British army, twenty-five leagues distant.

On the 13th and 14th of June accordingly, Lord Wellington, excessively vexed at having uselessly lost 2,000 of his best troops under the walls of Badajoz, and at having been twice repulsed before a place defended by a mere handful of French, successively broke up all his camps, and retired on the 17th upon Caya, falling back upon the mountains of Portalègre, and taking up a well chosen defensive position, as was his custom when in the presence of the impetuous troops of the French army.

When the brave garrison perceived the enemies' camps disappearing, they were at first in doubt respecting what could have occurred, but speedily learnt with transports of joy which were shared by the population, that by means of its own bravery and the succour which had arrived, the second siege was to end as the first had done, in their own triumph. In fact, Marshal Marmont, after having lost some days before the Tagus, on account of the insufficiency of the means of crossing it at his command, for they had only been able to forward to him from Madrid a portion of that which he had required, had at length crossed the stream, traversed the mountains of Truxillo, and on the 18th of June entered Merida; effecting on the same day his junction with Marshal Soult, who gave him the most hearty thanks for the aid he thus received, without which he must have endured the disgrace of seeing the capture by the enemy of Badajoz, which was the sole trophy of the two years' warfare in Andalusia.

On the 20th of June the two Marshals, whose forces numbered over fifty thousand men, made their entry into Badajoz, congratulated the heroic garrison which had so valiantly defended the fortress entrusted to their courage, distributed amongst them the rewards they so well deserved, and carried their advanced posts close to the English, who, at the sight of the enemy, remained carefully shut up in the camp.

If this excellent army, which, with the exception of that of Marshal Davoust, was the best in Europe, being composed of veteran troops of Austerlitz, d'Jena, and Friesland, and having endured, in addition to its other long campaigns, three years of the most formidable species of warfare in the



Peninsula; if this excellent army, we say, had been commanded by a single Marshal instead of two, and this Marshal had been Masséna, it would not have failed to have sought an encounter with the English, and made Lord Wellington expiate the success he had already obtained, which was due in some degree, certainly, to his own indisputable merit, but in a greater degree to the errors and the passions of his adversaries. But Marshal Soult, rejoiced at having escaped the disgrace of seeing Badajoz fall before his eyes, was not disposed to risk new hazards; whilst Marshal Marmont, feeling the greatest distrust of his colleague, was little inclined to act in concert with him; and was also disinclined to compromise the successful result of his march by risking the chances of a decisive battle. There was no one, in fact, in the French army, save Masséna, whose ardent military patriotism burned so fiercely at the sight of the enemy, that forgetful of himself he only cared to destroy or to be destroyed by the enemy before him.

The two Marshals committed the error, and it was one of the greatest of the errors committed at this time, of remaining with fifty thousand men in the presence of forty thousand of the enemy, amongst whom there were, moreover, only twenty-five thousand English, without attacking them. They passed some days in the neighbourhood of Badajoz, for the purpose of supplying its wants, reinforcing the garrison, repairing the breaches made in the walls, and filling its magazines which were now positively empty. Many of the inhabitants had fled at the time of the first siege, many more had followed their example at the approach of the second, and the fear of a third driving away a certain number of those that still remained, the city was thus almost empty. And this would not have been an evil, if the portion of the population which remained had not been, unfortunately, the most poor, the least capable of providing for their own subsistence, and the most difficult to keep in order.

The two Marshals had scarcely been in company a few days before a quarrel broke out between them. Marshal Soult had long been absent from Andalusia; for, having set out from Séville to fight the battle of Albuera, and having then determined to remain in position at Llerena, he had desired to draw the army of Portugal definitively within the circle of its operations, to leave to it the protection of Badajoz, to devolve upon it, thus, this most difficult portion of his task, and be able at length to devote his undivided forces to the siege of Cadiz, which had been so unfortunately neglected for that of Badajoz. This idea was a very natural one but somewhat unreasonable, for the necessary position of the

army of Portugal was Salamanca, for the preservation of Ciudad-Rodrigo, and for the defence against the English of old Castille, which was the base of operations of all the French armies. It was certainly within its proper line of operations, but only just within it, when following the English from the north to the south it disputed with them the possession of Badajoz. But to demand that it should establish itself permanently in Estremadura, was to require it to abandon its principal object for an accessory one. Had it done so, in fact, Lord Wellington would have been able to capture Ciudad-Rodrigo (as a similar error subsequently enabled him) and, by proceeding to Valladolid, to cut off the French communications. It must be added that to confine the army of Portugal at Badajoz by leaving it there alone, was to condemn it to the powerless state in which Marshal Soult had been at Llerena, and to the distress of seeing Badajoz captured under their very eyes. Reduced to thirty thousand men, as it actually was, it could effect nothing, and the only means by which it could again number forty or forty-five thousand troops was by returning to the north, and rallying all those which it had left sick, wounded, or exhausted at Salamanca.

Marshal Soult, pressed by the letters which he received from Seville, presented himself one morning before Marshal Marmont, to communicate to him his state of embarrassment and his wishes, and threw the man into a state of the greatest astonishment and distrust. And certainly, to leave Marshal Marmont alone at Badajoz was to expose him to the danger of being attacked by more than forty thousand of the enemy, whilst he had only thirty thousand with which to oppose them; and to satisfy the most ardent wishes of Lord Wellington, who awaited upon the Caya the abandonment of one of the Marshals by the other in order to overwhelm him. Marshal Marmont, who was very distrustful of his colleague, believed that he saw in this proposition an example of unheard-of ingratitude, and a perfidious desire to expose the army of Portugal to some signal disaster, and indulged, on the strength of this gratuitous supposition, in the most profound resentment. The truth was, that whilst Marshal Soult was far from wishing to compromise the army of Portugal, since he must, indeed, have suffered with it, he was nevertheless anxious to throw upon it the most ungrateful part of his task, and be thus at liberty to attend to his own affairs. Marshal Marmont replied with extreme severity, that if he wished to depart, leaving at Badajoz the bulk of the army of Andalusia, nothing could be easier, for it would remain to him, Marshal Marmont, to command the two united armies;

and that otherwise he himself would depart immediately, and would not return upon the Guadiana until he was assured of finding there a force sufficiently numerous, when united to his own troops, to vanquish the English. Having said this to Marshal Soult, he also expressed it to him in writing, in dry and peremptory terms, and made preparations for departure.

Since they would not remain united to give battle to the English, the two Marshals could do nothing better than place Badajoz in a fair state of defence, and then proceed, each in his own direction, to perform their essential duties. The presence of Marshal Soult in Andalusia was, in fact, indispensable, and nothing but a great victory over the English could have excused his not being there; and it was equally necessary that Marshal Marmont should proceed towards the north of the Peninsula. Marshal Soult, therefore, quitted Badajoz on the 27th of June, with a large portion of his army in order to proceed to Seville: only leaving General Drouet d'Erlon with two divisions and some cavalry to serve as a corps of observation around Badajoz. This was an error, for this corps, useless if the English departed and insufficient if they remained, could not but be compromised, as the result speedily showed, and it would have been better to have simply left in Badajoz a garrison of ten thousand men in lieu of five, with stores in proportion, and to have withdrawn the whole of the army of Andalusia. Badajoz would thus have been better able to defend itself, and Marshal Soult more capable of fulfilling the task assigned to him.

However this might be, he marched from Badajoz to Seville, and Marshal Marmont placed himself en route towards the Tagus. The English, exhausted by two fruitless sieges, and being without the matériel necessary to recommence a third, and having in their ranks many sick who had acquired upon the bank of the Guadiana the fevers of Estremadura, established themselves upon the Sierra de Portalègre, having need of repose, and taking up their summer quarters, which, in that burning climate, are equivalent to winter quarters in the north.

Marshal Marmont, whose mission as General in chief of the army of Portugal, was to oppose the undertakings of the English, in the first place in the north, where was one principal line of communication, and in the second place in the south, selected with great discernment the part of the Tagus between Talavera and Alcantara, as that from whence he could most easily execute his various duties. He was able, in fact, from the banks of the Tagus, by the col de Banos,

to reach Salamanca in four marches, to effect then a junction with the army of the north, and in concert with it to succour Ciudad-Rodrigo. And from this same position he could also speedily descend, by Truxillo, upon Merida and Badajoz, and unite there, as he did, with the army of Andalusia. Having determined upon this situation he chose the bridge of Almaraz as the centre of the communications which he had to guard, and adopted as his head quarters the village of Naval-Moral, situated between the Tagus and the Tiétar, and covered by these two rivers. He commenced operations by strengthening as much as possible the bridge of Almaraz, providing it with two strong têtes de pont; and as there were on the plateau de l'Estremadura towards the col de Mirabele dominant positions whence the works of Almaraz might be advantageously attacked, he constructed many forts on these positions, placing in them small garrisons. He also constructed on the Tiétar a bridge and a tête de pont, in such a manner as to render it equally easy to debouch from the one side or the other upon the enemy whom it might be necessary to encounter. These precautions having been taken he cantoned one of his divisions at Alvaraz, and disposed his light cavalry in echelons on the Truxillo road, in order to scour Estremadura, receive provisions, and obtain news from Badajoz. He established another of his divisions at Naval-Moral in order to guard his head quarters, and placed two at Placentia so as to be always ready to pass the mountains and descend upon Salamanca, and one at the col de Banos itself, to be always ready to debouch on old Castille. Finally, he left the sixth division on his rear to defend against the insurgents the rich province of Avila. When he had completed this wise and skilful distribution of his forces which permitted him to march upon Estremadura or Castille with equal rapidity, Marshal Marmont devoted his attention to the formation of magazines, the reparation of his artillery, and the care of his sick and wounded which remained around Salamanca. In the meantime, being situated on the confines of the army of the centre, and finding himself involved in disputes with it respecting the distance to which he might extend his search for provisions, he proceeded to Madrid, in order to come to an understanding with Joseph, with whom he had been very intimate, and with whom, in accordance with a fatality peculiar to all Spanish affairs, he had had many violent disputes, although the disposition of each was gentle, and they were extremely partial to each other.

It will be remembered that Marshal Bessièrès had feared much the effect which would be produced upon the northern provinces by the withdrawal of the army of Portugal, and



had made strenuous efforts to prevent its departure. The English, on their side, had indulged in hopes that these provinces would rise in insurrection as soon as the army of Portugal ceased to be in the midst of them. It happened, however, that these fears and hopes were equally unfounded, and, in spite of the exertions of the regency of Cadiz, the Castilians, almost as weary of the guerillas as of the French, had remained tranquil. At the same time the guerilla bands had taken advantage of the opportunity to attempt some enterprises. Marquesita had surprised Santander and committed great ravages throughout this province. The insurgents of Leon had harassed General Seras, but had been dispersed by some regiments of the young guard under Marshal Bessières, who, fearing that he could not occupy, at the same time, Burgos, Valladolid, Salamanca, Leon, and Astorga, had dismantled the works of Astorga, and withdrew from the Asturias General Bonnet, who had for three years maintained his position in these difficult provinces, with as much vigour as ability, even keeping in check Galicia, which did not dare to revolt, from the fear of being taken à revers. To recall him from the Asturias was, therefore, an error, which left the Asturians and Gallicians at liberty to descend upon Castille. Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, Marshal Bessières was quite in a position to keep Castille in check, and was about to be reinforced, moreover, by the division Souham, one of the three which composed the corps of reserve actually on its march to the frontiers of Spain.

Events of the utmost importance, and reflecting much glory on our arms, although productive of little addition to our power, occurred, in the meantime, in Catalonia and Aragon in connection with the army of General Suchet. It will doubtless be remembered with what vigour and what precision General Suchet conducted the sieges of Lerida, Mequinenza, and Tortosa, the success of which, coming after the capture of Girone, almost completed the conquest of Aragon and Catalonia. Nevertheless, Tarragone, the most important of the fortresses of this country, remained untaken, being protected, in addition to its own strength, which was great, by its contiguity to the sea and the support of the English fleets. It served, therefore, as the support, the asylum and inexhaustible magazine and arsenal for the insurrectionist army of Catalonia; and the necessity for its siege and capture was, accordingly, so urgent, that General Suchet had made with this view immense preparations; collecting a large and superb park of heavy artillery at Tortosa, together with 1500 horses. And all these preparations, General Suchet had been able to make without ruining the

country, by virtue of the repose which he had bestowed upon the province under his command, and the system of regular contributions which he had substituted for forcible seizures.

Besides the magazines of grain which he had made in Aragon, and in the portion of Catalonia entrusted to his care, General Suchet had collected great numbers of cattle, partly by purchase from the inhabitants of the Pyrenees, and partly by carefully preserving those which were seized from the insurgents of Soria and Catalayud. His stores being thus prepared he had distributed his army in such a manner that Aragon should not be left exposed to the enemy, whilst he should proceed to lower Catalonia for the purpose of the capture of Tarragone. When Napoleon had detached the lower portion of Catalonia for the purpose of confiding it together with Aragon to the command of General Suchet, he had granted to him at the same time sixteen or seventeen thousand men of the army of Catalonia, and had replaced them in that army by one of the three divisions of the corps of reserve. With this reinforcement General Suchet had forty thousand troops under his command, of whom he left twenty thousand to guard Aragon, whilst he destined the other twenty thousand for the siege he was about to undertake, and marched them upon Tarragone in two columns; the one of which, under General Harispe, descended from Lerida, whilst the other, under General Hubert, extended from Tortosa.

Tarragone, which consisted of a garrison almost equal in number to the army which was about to besiege it, and possessed formidable natural and artificial defences, was situated on a rock, bathed on one side by the waters of the Mediterranean, and on the other by the waters of the Francoli, which passed under its walls, and was divided into upper and lower town. The upper town was surrounded by old Roman walls and modern works of considerable *relief*; whilst the lower town, situated at the foot of the upper town on the level ground beside the Francoli, and on the sea shore, was defended by a bastioned enceinte, regularly and strongly fortified. Above from the amphitheatre formed by the two towns there was visible a fort called fort l'Oliva, built upon a rock, commanding all the environs, and communicating with the town by an aqueduct. Four hundred pieces of heavy artillery defended these three series of fortifications, which contained a garrison of 17,000 excellent troops under a good governor, General de Contreras, as well as a fanatical population, which was thoroughly resolved to defend the place to the utmost. In addition to these means of defence the English fleet was able to keep the place constantly supplied with fresh stores of

provisions, and to supply the place of those of the garrison who might be killed or wounded, with fresh troops from Catalonia and Valencia.

From whatever side Tarragone might be approached it presented equal obstacles to an attack. On the south and east was the escarpment of the rock, a series of well constructed lunettes, which united the enceinte of the two towns with the sea, and moreover the English fleet; on the north side was a dry and stony soil and the fort of l'Olive, which of itself demanded a regular siege; and finally, on the ascent from west to south, were the two towns, the one built above the other, with two series of fortifications in the low grounds and marshes bordering the Francoli. All the approaches to the place were, therefore, equally difficult, and its capture could only be effected by a long siege, which the Catalans and Valencians under the influence and support of the English would not fail frequently to interrupt.

All these difficulties, however, were far from daunting General Suchet, who regarded Tarragone as the most certain pledge for the security of Catalonia and Aragon, and as the key of Valencia. His two principal lieutenants were of the same opinion and were ready to second his intentions with the utmost zeal. These were the general of engineers, Rojmat, a sagacious and determined man, and profoundly skilled in his art, and Valée, a general in the artillery, a man of a just and noble temperament, who joined to the greatest keensightedness on the battle field, that administrative forethought which is so indispensable to officers of his branch of the service. After having conferred with his lieutenants General Suchet determined to attack the place on two sides at once, first on the south-west, by the low ground on the bank of the Francoli, bordering the low town, which it was necessary to capture before attempting to take the high town; and at the same time on the north by attacking the fort l'Olive.

Whilst the approaches were being opened in front of the low town, two of the bravest regiments in the army, the 7th and 16th of the line, under the young General Salme, attacked the fort l'Olive, before which the trenches were opened on the night between the 21st and 22nd of May. There was in front of this fort a work from whence the labour of opening the trenches received considerable interruption, and which by passing into our hands would serve as a protection for the troops engaged in it. Our soldiers, therefore, rushed upon it, and took it at the point of the bayonet. But the Spaniards, who prided themselves on being invincible, in the defence of their fortresses, and who had

considerable reason for indulging in this pride, assaulted it in their turn to the number of eight hundred, and threw themselves upon it with furious cries, under the leadership of intrepid officers, who planted their colours at the very foot of the work they had resolved to recapture. But the men of the 7th and the 16th, first pouring in upon it a volley of musketry, rushed upon this audacious column which thus attempted to snatch from them the fruits of their late victory, and drove it back under the very walls of the fort. L'Olivo presented a large surface without having much depth, and consisted of a line of bastions built upon a rock, with fosses hollowed out of the rock, and having in the rear an indented wall which communicated with a postern gate of the fortress. Within these was an entrenchment a little more elevated than the fort itself, and capable of offering a second means of resistance against a victorious enemy. There were twelve hundred men and fifty pieces of cannon of heavy calibre in these formidable works, and they could, moreover, easily obtain reinforcements from the town, which in its turn could receive them to an unlimited extent by means of its communication with the sea.

The approaches were carried on for many days under an incessant fire, and with considerable loss, amounting daily to fifty or sixty in killed or wounded, to the brave regiment which had obtained the honour of conducting this first siege. At length, being desirous of abridging the duration of a labour which proved so fatal to our ranks, they hastened to establish a breaching battery at a little distance from the fort, and it was ready to receive the artillery on the evening of the 27th. The employment of horses was impossible on such ground, and our soldiers, therefore, harnessed themselves to the pieces and drew them up under a horrible fire of grape, which destroyed a great number of them without checking the ardour of the others. In the meantime the enemy, perceiving what was the object of the groups on which they fired, determined to frustrate it by a vigorous sortie. The young and valiant General Salme, with a reserve of the 7th, marched to repel it, and at the moment when he was crying *En avant*, met his death. He was adored by his soldiers, and deserved their affection both on account of his courage and nobility of mind. Eager to avenge his death they threw themselves upon the Spaniards, and drove them at the bayonet's point under the very walls of Olivo. In the meantime the twenty-four pounders had been placed in the battery, and on the following day, at dawn, the fire opened upon the right bastion, opposite to our left.



So short was the interval between the opposing batteries that the effects of the artillery on each side were terribly destructive. Within a few hours a breach was opened; the battery played on the breach during the whole of the following day, and it was then resolved to attempt an assault, whatever might be the result obtained by our artillery; for fifteen days had already been spent before Tarragone, and if a single work could not be taken at such a cost of men and time, it was necessary to despair of being able to take the place itself.

Although they had suffered considerable losses, the 7th and 16th of the line had not abandoned to others the honour of carrying by assault the fort before which they had executed the approaches. A column of the 7th consisting of three hundred men, led by an officer named Miocque, advanced to throw itself directly into the breach, whilst a second column of the same strength, consisting of soldiers of the 16th under commandant Revel, was to attack the right of the fort, and attempt to penetrate by the gorge. General Harispe was ready to support these two columns with a reserve; and all the army was directed to be under arms and to feign a general attack.

In the midst of the night the signal was given for the commencement of the assault. Our sharpshooters opened a vigorous fire around the two towns, as though an attack were about to be made upon the enceinte itself. The enemy, in a state of the utmost confusion, opened fire from all their batteries without knowing in which direction the enemy was approaching; whilst the English fleet at the same time commenced a cannonade along the shore. For the purpose of enabling them to discern in what direction the threatened danger was approaching the Spaniards threw out fire pots; whilst they mingled their infuriated cries with the prolonged hurrahs of our soldiers.

During this state of confusion, which was planned on our side, the two assaulting columns rushed out of the trenches, and were exposed for forty-five or sixty paces to the fire of the fort l'Olivo. Arriving at the brink of the fosse hollowed out of the rock, they threw themselves into it, and whilst the column under Miocque ran with its scaling ladders to the right, to the breach which was but imperfectly practicable, the other, under Revel, turned to the left, to assail the fort by the gorge. At this moment 1200 Spaniards, sent to aid in the defence of l'Olivo, had just entered, and the gate closed upon them. A captain of engineers, named Papigny, at the head of thirty sappers attacked this gate with hatchets, and as it resisted their efforts seized a scaling ladder with

the intention of passing over it, but at that moment he fell, struck by a ball, and fell breathing the name of his mother. In the meantime Revel taking advantage of the circumstance that in this place there was no fosse, applied ladders against the escarpment, and the sappers and the grenadiers scaling the wall leaped into the fort, and opened the gate to the column. At the same moment Miocque's column, advancing to the breach and finding it impracticable, planted their scaling ladders, which were too short, until Meunier, a sergeant of sappers and miners, lending his strong shoulders to the voltigeurs, they were enabled to ascend, and entering the fort, to assist their comrades. This method of entrance was, however, both too slow and too fatal, and another party having sought another way, an officer of engineers, named Vacani, fortunately discovered it in the extremity of the aqueduct which supplied l'Olivo with water, and which was only protected by palisades. The two columns under Revel and Miocque having entered therefore by these various ways, threw themselves upon the Spaniards, who abandoned the fort and withdrew behind the entrenchment, where, being followed, and seeing scarcely any hope of safety they defended themselves with despair, and as they outnumbered our troops, and the escarpment of the entrenchment aided their defence, it appeared probable that they might be able to defend l'Olivo against us successfully. But the brave General Harispe advancing with his reserves, and five hundred Italians, under Marcogna and Sacchini, reanimated by their presence the ardour and confidence of the assailants. In one mass they scaled the entrenchment, and transported with rage, put to the edge of the sword the obstinate defenders of l'Olivo. General Suchet and his officers arrived in time to save a thousand men, but about nine hundred Spaniards had already fallen. The shouts of victory informed both the besieged and the besiegers of this important triumph.

There were found in l'Olivo fifty pieces of cannon, with a large quantity of cartridges; and no time was lost in turning the works of this fort against the fortress. Reassured respecting the result of the siege by the success just obtained, but terrified at the losses which the example of this success appeared to foretell, General Suchet desired to take advantage of the moral effect produced by it upon the two armies to tempt the garrison by conciliating words, and the proposition of a truce, the pretext of which should be the interment of the dead. The garrison replied, however, in accents of disdain and rage to the overtures made by General Suchet, and it was evident that nothing would be gained except by force. As the season rendered the ground hard

and difficult to excavate, and the exhalations from the corpses dangerous, it was necessary to burn them, instead of burying them, and unhappily the number was considerable.

L'Olive having been thus taken, the approaches were opened in front of the lower town, and a series of redoubts were erected along the coast, which were armed with very heavy artillery, for the purpose of keeping the English at a distance, and as a protection against their gun boats. The trench was opened at a hundred and thirty toises from the enceinte which formed the point proper to attack. There were on this side two bastions very close to each other, that of Chanoines on our left, and that of Saint-Charles on our right; the latter being connected with the wall of the port and the quay. The mass of fire, therefore, to which those who carried on the approaches would be exposed, was not very considerable, since they could only receive that of the bastions towards which they approached. Somewhat above, indeed, and in the rear of these bastions, was the fort Royal, and on our right, on the sea shore, was another little fort, named Francoli, because situated on the mouth of that river; this latter work was attached to this fortress by a bastioned wall; and it was determined, that whilst the approaches should be continued towards the two bastions des Chanoines and Saint-Charles, a breaching battery should be directed against fort Francoli.

Twenty-five pieces of cannon having been distributed amongst various batteries, which fired at once on the place itself and the fort Francoli, speedily succeeded in opening a breach, which was perfectly practicable to an assault from our dauntless troops. Although it had a scarp and a counterscarp, of masonry, and fosses full of water, it was resolved to attempt the assault immediately, and St. Cyr Nugues, chief of the staff of General Suchet, conducting three little columns of infantry, led them to the attack on the night between the 7th and 8th of June. Our soldiers threw themselves into the fosses up to their breasts in water, and climbed the breach under a violent fire from the enemy. The Spaniards resisted desperately at first as usual, but as the work was only connected with the town by a communication both narrow and long, they feared their retreat might be cut off, and fled, therefore, towards the fortress. They were pursued by our soldiers, who shouted "to the town, to the town;" with the hope of being able to terminate the siege by a coup de main, but a terrible storm of fire and formidable works compelled them to stop, and convinced them that this hope was a vain one. Colonel St. Cyr Nugues drew back his troops into the fort Francoli, and hastened to

make it tenable, and to turn against the roadstead the newly captured artillery.

This was the second work carried by assault, but there still remained many others to be taken by the same means; and among these was a lunette, named the Prince, resting on the sea, and occupying the middle of the wall which connected the Francoli fort with the fortress. A breach was effected in it, and on the 16th it was taken after another assault, which was long and murderous. There now remained no more obstacles to the attack of the two bastions of St. Charles and Chanoines. The one on the right, that named St. Charles, and covered the walls of the fort; whilst the other on the left covered the angle formed by the west front of the enceinte, with the north front of fort Royal.

If the enemy's batteries were not very extensive, they were very formidable on account of their height, and it was most probable that this attack would cost us many soldiers, in the formation of the approaches, in the service of the batteries, and the assault itself, which would doubtless be fiercely resisted, since on its success, or the reverse, depended the fate of the lower town and the fort itself.

General Suchet was ardently desirous of accelerating the siege, for besides the daily loss of troops, which in the space of one and twenty days amounted to 2,500 men, he perceived difficulties accumulating around him on all sides. The English fleet, escorting an immense convoy, had reinforced the garrison with 2000 men, provisions, and military stores of all kinds, and supplied it with a brave officer, General Sarsfield, who was to conduct the defence of the lower town. It had then disembarked on the Barcelona road the Valencian division, consisting of 6000 men, which was to join General Campo-Verde, who, at the head of the Catalan army, was in command of 15,000 men, with which he kept the field, hoping to seize our convoys, or to surprise us in our trenches, in concert with the garrison and the fleet.

General Harispe, established on the Barcelona route with his two divisions, one Italian and one French, kept a careful watch for attacks from this quarter; whilst General Habert, posted with a French division on the banks of the Francoli, guarded the Tortosa route by which arrived our convoys of artillery, and that of Reus, by which came our convoys of provisions. The remainder of the troops were employed in carrying on the siege. Precautions were taken against an attack whether from without or within, and General Suchet had perfect confidence in the ability of his valiant soldiers to resist either. But our outposts, echeloned on the route of our convoys, had every day to maintain conflicts with de-



tachments of Campo-Verde's troops, and this General himself boasted of having received large reinforcements, and of being about to receive more. At the risk therefore of weakening his line of defence against the insurgents of Teruel and Calatayud under Villa-Campa, General Suchet determined to call to his aid General Abbé with a brigade. As the fate of the country depended on the result of the siege of Tarragone, it was necessary to sacrifice everything to the purpose of effecting its capture.

Influenced by the above reasons, and seconded in his endeavours by the boundless enthusiasm of his troops, General Suchet lost not a day nor an hour in the prosecution of the siege. The second parallel was already opened, and a series of batteries had been arranged which, embracing in their vast circuit the bastions Chanoines and Saint-Charles, would be capable of breaching both, and the fort Royal also. General Suchet hoped to be able by a general and simultaneous assault to carry the lower town and all its defences; and flattered himself that after having made this grand effort, he might consider the difficult conquest of Tarragone almost accomplished.

Forty-four pieces of heavy artillery opened fire whilst the works in the trenches were still carried on, and were energetically answered by the cannon of the fortress, which was almost the double of ours. Thus our épaulements were continually overthrown, and our brave artillerymen, undaunted in the midst of the ruins, continually rebuilt the destroyed works and replied to the enemy's fire, whilst completely exposed to it, whilst the infantry seconded their exertions with the utmost devotion.

On the 18th the third parallel was completed. A subterranean passage led into the fosses of the two bastions, the counterscarp was overthrown, and the openings were completed, by which the assaulting columns were to enter the fosses and throw themselves into the trenches.

On the morning of the 24th of June, at the very moment when Badajoz was rejoicing at its deliverance by the two Marshals, all the batteries both old and new opened fire on the walls of Tarragone, which replied with the utmost vigour. The chief of our batteries was overthrown by a powder magazine; but Colonel Ricci, who was almost buried under the ruins, having been promptly rescued, reestablished the battery, and again turned its fire against the enemy. In the meantime the infantry eager to rush to the assault, with loud cries urged on the artillerymen to fresh exertions, and the latter responding to their wishes redoubled their activity and zeal.

In the evening three breaches were judged practicable, one in the bastion des Chanoines, another in the bastion Saint-Charles, and a third in the fort Royal, General Suchet and the officers who aided him with their councils to hazard the result of the siege on a general assault, either to fail at once or to carry the lower town, the capture of which would ensure that of the upper town. The conduct of the assault was, accordingly, entrusted to General Palombini, and 1,500 grenadiers and voltigeurs, together with sappers furnished with scaling ladders, were placed under his charge; General Montmarie taking up a position a little to the left, with the 5th *leger* and the 16th of the line, as a reserve, and a precaution against a sortie from the fortress; whilst still more to the left two battalions of the 7th of the line supported General Montmarie himself. It was also arranged that a vigorous fire should be opened from fort l'Olive upon the two towns, and that General Harispe should threaten the opposite front with his whole division. The Spaniards on their side placed General Saarsfield, with the best soldiers, in the lower town. We may also observe, as an instance of the rage with which the opposed troops regarded each other, that the summons to surrender usually made before an assault was now neglected.

At seven o'clock in the evening whilst it was still daylight, three columns threw themselves simultaneously upon the three breaches. The first composed of select men of the 116th, 117th, and 121st, under the command of Colonel Bouvier, of the Engineers, rushed into the breach in the bastion des Chanoines, and attempted to wrest its possession from the Spaniards who defended it, and after a desperate struggle succeeded in arriving at its summit and repulsing the enemy, to be in turn repulsed by the latter; but our troops returned to the charge, and held their ground with desperate tenacity. A hundred grenadiers rushing upon a lunette somewhat to the right, speedily carried it, and then hurried to the bastion des Chanoines to the aid of the troops under Colonel Bouvier. in the meantime a second column under the Polish officer Fondzelski, consisting of men selected from the ranks of the 1st and 5th *leger*, and the 42nd of the line, threw themselves upon the bastion Saint-Charles, and were met by the most determined resistance. But, supported by a third column under the command of Colonel Bourgeois, they maintained their ground in the breach, and ultimately remained masters of it. Fondzelski then pursued the Spaniards across the low town, whilst Colonel Bourgeois, who followed him, proceeded to the left, to the aid of Colonel Bouvier in his attack on the bastion des Cha-

noines, which, by means of these various reinforcements, was speedily taken, and the united troops threw themselves upon the Chateau Royal.

In the meantime General Saarsfield, coming up with a reserve, furiously attacked Fondzelski's troops, which had already taken possession of half the lower town, and which now, in accordance with the instructions they had received, withdrew into the houses, and obstinately defended them. Fortunately Colonel Robert of the 117th, with the aide-de-camp of the General in chief, M. de Rigny, who brought up a reserve of the 5th *leger*, 42nd, 115th, and 121st of the line, supported Colonel Fondzelski, drove back Saarsfield's troops, and advanced as far as the walls of the upper town.

The assault which had commenced at seven was concluded at eight; its result being to give into our possession almost a hundred pieces of cannon, an immense quantity of munitions, a few living prisoners, a great number of the enemy's killed and wounded, the bastions St. Charles and des Chanoines, the fort Royal, all the lower town, the port and the batteries which defended it. Without loss of time a fire was opened upon the English squadron, and it immediately set sail. The losses of our troops in this fierce combat, in which they had had to contend with 5000 Spaniards, amounted to 500 men *hors de combat*, whilst that of the enemy was about 1300 killed, and about 200, for the most part wounded, who fell into our hands.

We had already undertaken four murderous assaults, and this was not the last which we should be compelled to make in the course of the siege of Tarragone,—a siege which is a memorable example of heroism, whether as regards the besiegers or the besieged. It now became absolutely necessary to bring the siege to a conclusion, for the English fleet, having proceeded a second time from the south to the north off the coast of Catalonia, had reinforced General Campo-Verde with a new Spanish detachment, and a corps of 2000 English. There still remained at least 12,000 men in the upper town, with an immense artillery, and a sortie from within might at any time surprise us. On the 24th, in fact, considerable agitation was visible amongst the garrison, and mounted couriers were seen in the direction of Barcelona. The General in chief posted General Harispe, to whom he entrusted the most difficult undertakings, on the Barcelona road, with two divisions of all the cavalry, whilst he himself took up a position between the fortress and the troops of General Harispe, ready to throw himself upon the point where his presence might be most necessary.

The trench was opened upon a sort of slightly inclined

plateau rising to the upper town, and on a level with the roofs of the houses of the lower town. Our first and only parallel embraced almost the whole front of the upper town, composed in this part of four bastions, and had for its principal object the establishment of two batteries, to be directed against the bastion Saint-Paul, which was the last to the left. The works were vigorously proceeded with, in order that a breach might be speedily opened, for it was not expected that this noble garrison, after having endured four assaults, would shrink from the last, although it would thus expose itself to being put to the edge of the sword. One of our heralds having presented himself out of the trenches waving a white flag, had only received injurious treatment for answer. A deserter having given information of a projected attack from without, to take place on the 29th, the General in chief made every arrangement that the last assault should be made on the evening of the 28th. The construction of the breaching battery was hastened, and having been completely armed on the night of the 27th, the troops performing with enthusiasm the difficult task of placing the pieces in their positions, on the 28th of June, which was to be the last day of this memorable siege, the French opened fire at dawn with some anxiety, for it was absolutely necessary that a breach should be effected in the course of the same day. Three hundred good marksmen, posted in favorable positions, kept up a constant fire upon the enemy's embrasures, for the purpose of destroying their artillerymen, and the Spaniards, boldly exposing themselves, were no less assiduous in firing upon ours. But nothing could daunt our artillerymen, or check the zeal with which they continued the cannonade which was to open to us the walls of Tarragone. At length, towards the middle of the day, the breach appeared to widen beneath our continued fire. Our soldiers, thronging from every side of the camp, gazed eagerly at this spectacle, whilst the Spaniards from their ramparts provoked us to the utmost of their power with cries and taunts.

About five o'clock in the evening General Suchet determined to attempt the assault, in order to avoid a combat by night, if, as it had been said, the great street de la Rambla, which ran transversely across Tarragone, should be barricaded and defended. General Habert, who had captured the town of Lerida, was to conduct the assault; and five hundred men in two detachments, of the select companies of the 1st and 5th leger, the 14th, 42nd, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 121st of the line, and the 1st Polish regiment of the Vistula, were placed under his orders. A second column of almost equal force, taken from the French and Italian troops



present at the siege, were placed under the orders of General Ficatier, and held in reserve. On the left and on the north front which formed an angle with the west front which we attacked, General Montmarie was posted, at the head of the 116th and 117th, with the object of endeavouring to carry by escalade the gate du Rosaire, near the bastion which had been breached, and opposite to the extremity of the rue de la Rambla. These arrangements having been completed at half-past five, the General in chief gave the signal, and the first column, running across a certain space in which they were completely exposed, turned aside to avoid the aloes growing at the foot of the rampart, thence proceeded in a straight line to the breach, and commenced to ascend it under a terrific fire; whilst the bravest of the Spanish troops, armed with muskets, pikes, and axes, shouting furious cries, awaited them at its summit. For a moment our soldiers were on the point of yielding to the patriotic fury of the Spaniards, but at a signal from the General in chief a second column advanced, led by General Habert, Colonel Pepe, Captain Ceroni, and all the aides-de-camp of General Suchet, MM. de Saint-Joseph, de Rigny, d'Aramon, Meyer, Desaix, Ricard and Auvray. With these was also an Italian sergeant named Bianchini, who, as a recompense for prodigies of valour performed in the attack on fort l'Olive, had demanded and obtained the honour of marching at the head of the last assault of Tarragone. This reinforcement gave a vigorous impulse to our first columns, and the two columns arrived together at the summit of the breach. The brave Bianchini, after having received many musket shots, still advanced and fell. The youthful Aramon was stricken down with a wound in the thigh. Our troops now penetrated into the town, some to the right and others to the left, for the purpose of turning the barricaded streets, and especially the rue de la Rambla. The General in chief immediately sent forward General Ficatier's reserve to take part in this second combat, which might be very desperate, as the garrison still numbered ten or twelve thousand men who were resolved to defend themselves to the death. In the meantime General Montmarie advanced towards the gate du Rosaire with the 116th and 117th of the line, and dashed into the fosse under a murderous fire. He had desired to plant ladders against the gate, but he found it walled up and barricaded. A knotted cord, suspended from one of the embrasures and serving the Spaniards as a means of ascent, was then discovered by our voltigeurs, who seized hold of it and climbed up one after the other, whilst the regiments remaining in the fosse received the fire from the walls; but scarcely had a few of our brave voltigeurs penetrated by

this means into the place than the Spaniards rushed upon them, and they must have been overwhelmed had not an officer of engineers, named Vacani, entered the town with a detachment of sappers, who opened the gate du Rosaire with hatchets, and gave admission to the troops of General Montmarie, who then advanced into the interior of the upper town and attacked the barricades of the rue de la Rambla in conjunction with the troops of Generals Habert and Ficatier. Our troops were now thoroughly exasperated and bayoneted all whom they met. A troop of the enemy having fled towards the cathedral, they pursued them to this edifice, which was ascended by sixty steps, and having rushed up these steps in spite of a murderous fire, slew them all without mercy. Finding, however, that there were here some hundreds of wounded they stayed their hands and spared them. At the same moment eight thousand men, the sole survivors of the garrison, having gone out by the gate of Barcelona endeavoured to save themselves by the side of the sea; but General Harispe, throwing himself across their path, compelled them to give up their arms; and from this moment both the upper and lower towns and the forts l'Olive and Francoli were equally in our power.

Such was this horrible assault, the most terrible perhaps which had ever taken place; at least up to that time. The breaches were covered with the corpses of French soldiers, but the town was strewed with a far larger number of Spanish soldiers. The most extraordinary state of disorder prevailed throughout the streets; from time to time some fanatical Spaniards courted death for the sake of yet destroying a few Frenchmen. Our soldiers, yielding to a feeling common to all troops who have taken a town by assault, regarded Tarragone as their property, and overran the houses, in which they committed, however, more waste than pillage,

But General Suchet and his officers had little difficulty in prevailing upon them to refrain from conduct which they assured them was an extreme and barbarous use of the rights of war. Gradually order was restored, the flames were extinguished, and account was taken of the trophies which had thus been obtained. Three hundred pieces of cannon were taken, with an immense number of muskets, projectiles, and munitions of all kinds, twenty flags, and ten thousand prisoners, amongst whom was the governor de Contreras himself, whom General Suchet treated with the utmost respect, although the resistance which had rendered necessary the last assault had been an act of useless despair, and this assault might have been spared as well to the French as the Spaniards themselves. But patriotism should ever

be honoured, however extreme. Besides the ten thousand prisoners the enemy lost six or seven thousand by fire and sword. Our own losses were about 4,300 men put hors de combat, of whom a thousand or twelve hundred were dead, and fifteen or eighteen hundred so much injured as to be incapable of again serving in the ranks. We lost besides about twenty officers of engineers, for this corps, always distinguished in the French army, had displayed as much courage as talent in the course of this memorable siege, which had lasted almost two months, during which nine breaches had been opened, and there had been five assaults, three of which, namely, those of fort l'Olivo and of the lower and upper towns, were amongst the most furious ever known.

The capture of Tarragone was an event of the utmost importance; for it deprived the Catalan insurrection of its chief support, divided it from the Valencian insurrection, and was calculated to produce throughout the whole Peninsula an immense moral effect, of which full advantage might have been taken, if we had been prepared at that time to overwhelm the Spaniards with a vast concourse of troops. But, unfortunately, we were not so prepared, and in consequence of the exclusive devotion of Napoleon's mind to other designs, the only result of this great siege was to open to us the Valencian road. General Suchet had been ordered to dismantle Tarragone, in accordance with Napoleon's desire that Tortosa should be the only fortress occupied in this part of Spain, and he only consented to preserve Tortosa on account of the mouths of the Ebro; but as Suchet perceived, in common with General Rogniat, that by preserving only the upper town it might be occupied with a thousand men, he dismantled only the works of the lower town, leaving in the upper a garrison well provided with stores of all kinds, endeavoured to reassure and draw back the inhabitants, placed his park of artillery and munitions in Tortosa, sent back the principal detachments to the posts from which they had been drawn, in order to repress the guerilla bands, which had become bolder than ever during the siege, and then, with a brigade of infantry, pursued Campo-Verde; but although he conducted the pursuit with the greatest activity he was not able to come up with him. In the course of his pursuit of Campo-Verde he laid siege to the famous convent of Mount Serrat, and his troops took it almost immediately by the exercise of incredible boldness. He thus rendered all the services he could to the army of Catalonia, which was completely occupied in the blockade of Figüères, and the periodical revictualling of Barcelona, and then re-entered Saragossa, to put in order the affairs of his government; and

there found a Marshal's baton awaiting him ; a just reward for his services ; for if the results of the sieges of Aragon and Catalonia, which were the best conducted sieges since Vauban, were due in great measure to the exertions of the officers of engineers, and the brave soldiers of the army of Aragon, they were also due in great part to the military skill of the General in chief, and the profound wisdom of his system of administration.

The months of July, August, and sometimes September, could not but be in Spain months of inaction. The English were incapable of any active movements during these burning months ; and our soldiers, although extremely active and inured to privations, had nevertheless need of some repose after their incessant marches. Nevertheless, in consequence of his forced sojourn in Andalusia Marshal Soult had left affairs in so unsettled a state that he was compelled to be very active during these months so generally devoted to repose. Two Spanish divisions which under General Blake had taken part in the battle of Albuera, had been detached by Lord Wellington for the purpose of disturbing Séville. But instead of marching directly thither they had proceeded to the district of Niebla, towards the mouth of the Guadiana ; and Marshal Soult having sent in pursuit of them one of his divisions retired with the remainder to Séville, to bestow upon the affairs of his government that attention which they required. He found the insurgents of the mountains of Ronda, always very active, occupied in laying siege to the town of Ronda itself, and those of Murcia, after having forced the 4th corps to shut itself up in Grenada, daring to advance even as far as Baeza and Jaen, to a position from which they could interrupt the communications between Andalusia and Madrid. It was necessary, therefore, to march at once upon Ronda, Jaen, Baeza, and Grenada, to repress this insurrectional boldness ; and Marshal Soult, taking advantage of the departure of Marshal Victor and General Sebastiani, had abolished the system of corps d'armée, which was always bad except where Napoleon himself was actually present ; had persisted in only leaving 12,000 men including artillerymen and marines, before Cadiz, and then recalled the detachment which had been sent to Niebla, and the presence of which had been sufficient to compel the two divisions of General Blake to re-embark.

He had had himself preceded by General Godinot, at the head of a detachment which comprised three good infantry regiments, the 12th léger, the 55th and 58th of the line, and the 27th of dragoons, with directions to drive the insurgents from Jaen and Baeza, whilst the main body of



troops advanced directly upon Grenada. The insurgents, although numerous, made no more determined a defence than they usually made in the open country, and successively abandoned Jaen and Baeza, to retire into the kingdom of Murcia. The Marshal entered Grenada, rallied there a portion of the 4th corps, and on the 8th of August quitted this city to continue his march. In the meantime the insurgents of Murcia having joined Generals Blake and Bellesteros, who had come in English vessels from the mouths of the Guadiana as far as Almería, had taken up a strong position at la Venta de Baul, and numbered altogether about twenty thousand. The steep and almost inaccessible position which they occupied opposed great difficulties to an assault, and we at first lost some men in unsuccessful attempts. But General Godinot, having driven from Jaen the insurgents of Murcia, advanced to turn the position, and had scarcely appeared on the left of Marshal Soult when the Spaniards retired with the utmost haste into the province of Murcia, making a most disorderly retreat, and dispersing about the country to be put to the sword by the cavalry of General Latour-Maubourg. The prompt and entire dispersion of this corps was a guarantee, not that they would not again appear, but that they would not prove troublesome to us for at least some months. And now Marshal Soult, having posted in Grenada a portion of the troops of the old 4th corps, and sent reinforcements to Ronda under General Laval, entered Séville, to proceed at length with the siege of Cadiz, and to provide all that was necessary for its prosecution.

The remainder of the month of August was passed in almost complete inaction; Marshal Soult granting a little repose to his troops, which from the original number of eighty thousand were now reduced to forty thousand at the most, and disputing with Joseph the possession of various detachments which he demanded for the army of the centre from the army of Andalusia. At the same time Marshal Marmont, who remained encamped on the Tagus in the neighbourhood of Almaraz, was also continually quarrelling with Joseph with respect to the districts from which he had a right to draw forage for the troops under his command; whilst Joseph, himself never ceasing to utter complaints, was demanding that in default of the fourth part of the contributions levied by the Generals, which they constantly declined to forward, Napoleon should send him an additional million a month; and could only rejoice in one consolation, which was, the appointment of Marshal Jourdan to be the chief of his staff. In the meantime Marshal Suchet, acting according to his own views and involved in no such disputes, was quietly preparing the

expedition of Valencia, which Napoleon had directed as the necessary consequence of the capture of Tarragone; and finally, General Baraguey-d'Hilliers, specially charged with the blockade of Figuières, having driven back the Spaniards who attempted to make their escape, compelled them to surrender themselves prisoners of war, and thus to expiate the surprise of this frontier fortress.

During these months of inaction Lord Wellington formed his plans for the renewal of operations in September, and included in his projects nothing less than the capture of Ciudad-Rodrigo and Badajoz. In fact, since he had succeeded in freeing Portugal from the presence of the French, this plan was the best that he could have formed, for these fortresses were the keys of Spain, the one in the north and the other in the south; and once master of them he would be able to prevent the French from invading Beira or l'Alentijo, and could easily avail himself of the first opportunity for the invasion of Castile or Andalusia. Another reason which led him to form this plan was, that he was anxious to perform some decided action, six months having now elapsed since Portugal had been reconquered without adding any remarkable performance to his former exploits. What he had done had been much praised in England, and with good reason, although perhaps this praise had been a little exaggerated, for it generally is so in cases in which it is paid after having been too long withheld. The opposition party in England, however, still existed, and partly in good faith, partly in conformity with systematic resistance to the course pursued by the government, whilst they confessed that Portugal was saved for the time, declared that no further success would be gained, and that the maintenance of a ruinous war in the Peninsula, would most probably have no result equivalent to the risk to which it constantly exposed the English army, of being driven into the sea by the French. Lord Wellington therefore was urged by an infinity of reasons, some of them military and others political, to perform some fresh distinguished action, and to capture either Badajoz or Ciudad-Rodrigo, two obstacles which rendered impossible, whilst possessed by the enemy, every ulterior operation of any importance.

The task which he thus proposed to himself was, however, by no means an easy one; for if he advanced to Badajoz it was to be presumed that he would find there the united forces of Marshals Soult and Marmont; and if he advanced to Ciudad-Rodrigo he would there meet Marshal Marmont reinforced with whatever detachments he might be able to procure from the armies of the centre and the north. In

either case he would run the risk of encountering forces too considerable to permit him to attempt a great siege in their presence, for according to his custom, he was unwilling to engage the enemy save when in almost impregnable defensive positions, and when possessed of a numerical superiority in force which, in conjunction with his advantageous position, would render the result as certain as any warlike operation could be. Nevertheless, although Lord Wellington might be compelled to meet either in the south or the north, forces superior in numbers to his own, he yet had in his favour many great advantages. The route which he had formed for himself within the frontiers of Portugal, from north to south, over which he had already passed so frequently, and which descended from Guarda to Espinhal, from Espinhal to Abrantès, and from Abrantès to Elvas, had been opened with great care, furnished with numerous magazines, and provided with bridges on the Mondego and the Tagus. He had 6000 Spanish mules to carry provisions for his army; he was sole commander of his forces, obtained complete obedience to his orders, and had the immense advantage, as he himself confessed, of being informed by the Spaniards of all the enemy's movements. The French Generals on the other hand, were independent of each other, divided in counsels, wanting everything, informed of nothing, and were never, except by a kind of miracle, united in the pursuit of any common end, or possessed of the materials necessary to the performance of any important operation. Napoleon had recommended them mutually to assist each other, but being unable to foresee the particular cases in which it might be necessary, he had been compelled to confine himself to a general recommendation, and we have already seen how they executed even the most precise orders given with respect to a determined and important object. It was by no means, therefore, impossible for Lord Wellington, by making his preparations in secret, and adroitly veiling his movements, to snatch a period of twenty-five or thirty days in which to undertake and complete a great siege, before the French could arrive to raise it. It was upon this chance that Lord Wellington based his plan of operations for the autumn of 1811, and the winter of 1811-1812.

His troops being at this time somewhat disorganised by their repulse before Badajoz, he resolved to change the object presented to their efforts, and on this account determined to proceed to Ciudad-Rodrigo. He had, moreover, very judiciously observed that Marshal Marmont in ascending from Naval-Moral to Salamanca, to the relief of Ciudad-Rodrigo, would have less chance of obtaining important



reinforcements, than in descending into Estremadura to the relief of Badajoz, for in the last case he would be always sure of finding there Marshal Soult, who had at his command a much larger force than Marshal Bessières in Castille, and who had the greatest possible personal interest in the defence of Badajoz. It was much wiser, therefore, for Lord Wellington to attempt the capture of Ciudad-Rodrigo than of Badajoz, except for the fact that he possessed on this side no park of siege artillery, and no place in which it could be securely stored; whilst for the attack of Badajoz he possessed two vast magazines, the first at Abrantès, whither an immense matériel had been transported by the English fleet, and the second at Elvas, between which and Abrantès there was a good road, and where all the matériel necessary to the prosecution of a great siege could be safely stored.

Nevertheless, refusing to be discouraged by this difficulty, Lord Wellington had a park of heavy siege artillery secretly transported to the neighbourhood of Ciudad-Rodrigo, sending it piece by piece, and then concealing it in various villages. He brought, moreover, all his divisions successively into upper Beira, save that of General Hill, which remained in observation on the Guadiana, and encamped his troops behind the Agueda, leaving to the partisan Don Julian the care of reducing Ciudad-Rodrigo to a state of want by incessant incursions across the surrounding country.

Towards the end of August and the commencement of September, Marshal Marmont, better informed this time than our generals ordinarily were respecting the enemy's movements, received information of the change of position of the English army, and received from General Reynaud, the governor of Ciudad-Rodrigo, a report that this fortress was reduced to the last extremities, that the garrison, already placed on half rations, had only sufficient animal food to last to the 15th of September, and only sufficient bread to last to the 25th, and that at that period it would be compelled to surrender. After receiving such information as this there was no time to lose. Marshal Marmont concerted with General Dorsenne, who had replaced the Duke of Istria, who had been recalled to Paris, and it was arranged that the latter should prepare a large convoy of provisions in the neighbourhood of Salamanca, and proceed thither with a portion of his troops, and that Marshal Marmont should quit the banks of the Tagus, repass the Guadarrama by the Col de Bâvas or Péralès, and descend upon Salamanca, for the purpose of concurring in revictualling Ciudad-Rodrigo, at any hazard.

These arrangements, perfectly understood on each side, were exactly carried out. Marshal Marmont concentrated



his divisions, and carried them successively across the Guadarrama. He would have been glad to have marched the whole six towards Ciudad-Rodrigo, by which means he would have had at his command more than 30,000 men, his corps having rallied a portion of its sick and wounded. But to have enabled him to have done this it would have been necessary that Joseph should have sent him a division of the army of the centre, to have enabled him to guard the position of the army of Portugal between the Tietá and the Tagus, and to have done this would have been most distasteful to Joseph, and would have exposed his capital on the side of Guadalaxara or La Mancha. Not being able, therefore, to obtain this assistance from Joseph, Marshal Marmont was compelled to leave one whole division on the Tagus for the protection of his bridges and his depôts, and he selected for this purpose the division which he had placed on the Truxillo road, as a corps of observation in the direction of Estremadura. With the five others he passed the Guadarrama, and at the commencement of September arrived in the neighbourhood of Salamanca with 26,000 troops. In the meantime General Dorsenne had proceeded to Astorga with 15,000 excellent soldiers, comprising the young guard and one of the divisions of reserve which had recently entered the Peninsula. The cavalry, especially, was superb. He met on his march an almost equal number of Gallician insurgents commanded by the Spanish general Abadia, and having driven them before him as far as Villa-Franca, turned to the left towards Zamora and Salamanca.

On the 20th of September the two armies of the north and of Portugal united. They were both in a very effective state, thoroughly refreshed, provided with all necessary matériel, and at least six thousand excellent cavalry, and numbered altogether over forty thousand men. The English, usually so well informed, had not expected so prompt and extensive a combination of the French troops; and although their army was almost as numerous as ours, it was consumed with disease, by no means prepared for a battle, dispersed in cantonments so distant from each other that whilst Crawford's light division was in advance of the Agueda occupied in the blockade of Ciudad-Rodrigo, the main body of the army was far on the other side of this river. The effective English troops of Lord Wellington's army were, moreover, only twenty-five thousand, the remainder consisting of Portuguese.

The French Generals, if they would have taken any pains to inform themselves of these facts, might have taken advantage of them to strike a decisive blow at the English General,

which his good fortune as much as his skill had enabled him hitherto to avoid. But whether informed of these facts, or not, they should have considered that they might at any moment meet with the English army, either concentrated or dispersed, and should have been prepared in the one case to engage it, and in the other to destroy it.

It was, consequently, their duty to march as though they were constantly exposed to the necessity of fighting a battle. But they did nothing of the sort, and even neglected to arrange respecting engaging the enemy if circumstances should render it necessary or advantageous to do so. It was in fact, only arranged that General Dorsenne, taking a direction to the right towards Ciudad-Rodrigo, should introduce the convoy of provisions, and that Marshal Marmont, advancing with his cavalry by the left should execute a vigorous reconnoissance around Fuente Guinaldo and Espeja. As the infantry of the army of Portugal had not yet arrived General Dorsenne lent to Marshal Marmont the division Thiébault, to employ it as he might find occasion. The march was commenced, therefore, before all the army was assembled and in a fit state to receive the enemy should it appear. It was very improbable, indeed, that the English would be disposed to engage, for their position in front of the Agueda was not at this moment a favourable one; but whatever their position it was unwise to approach them without being prepared to take advantage of favourable opportunities, or to guard against mischance.

Our troops marched upon Ciudad-Rodrigo in this species of disorder, and on the 23rd of September had the satisfaction of succeeding in introducing without striking a blow an immense convoy of provisions. This end having been obtained the two French Generals had doubtless performed the chief object of their march, but they were anxious to obtain information respecting the English army, and Marshal Marmont advancing to the left resolved to execute the projected reconnoissance. Pushing forward with his cavalry, which were still commanded by the brave Montbrun, he perceived Crawford's light division divided into two brigades, situated at some distance from each other, and in such a state that a strong advanced guard might have destroyed them in succession. Moreover, Lord Wellington, whose army was much scattered, wanted one of its divisions, and did not hold one of those positions on which alone he chose to engage our troops, might have probably been vanquished, and his whole force destroyed, if he had advanced to the succour of Crawford's brigades.

Cavalry being, unfortunately, the only disposable force,

that alone could be advanced. General Montbrun threw himself upon the English infantry with his accustomed vigour, scattered them, although they occupied a very favourable position, and took four pieces of cannon, but could not keep them, for he was compelled to give way when the enemy's infantry having rallied returned to the charge. Marshal Marmont, who was present at this engagement, called loudly for the division Thiébault, but General Dorsenne, who was a man of perverse and selfish character, although a brave officer, either out of ill will or want of time, failed to bring up his division until it could be no longer of any use ; the two English brigades having rallied and united, and being already safe from our attack.

On the following day the whole infantry of the army was in line, but the English were in full retreat, and at too great a distance to enable us to come up with them, at least in a single march. It was evident that if we had attacked them on the previous day in suitable order, there would have been a good chance of crushing them ; and even now it would still have been practicable to do this had the soldiers had upon their backs three or four days' provisions ; but they had not, and they were compelled to retrace their steps, with the single satisfaction of having revictualled Ciudad-Rodrigo, and the bitter regret of having permitted the escape of the English army at the moment when it might have been overwhelmed.

Napoleon persisting, as we have seen, in considering that the reserve recently prepared would be sufficient for the supply of the necessities of the Spanish war, provided good use were made of the autumn and winter, and desiring to withdraw in the spring the imperial guard, wished that the important operations should be commenced in September. The first of these was, in his estimation, the occupation of Valencia, and it was because the capture of Tarragone conduced considerably to the occupation of Valencia, that he heard of with so much pleasure, and rewarded so munificently this last exploit of General Suchet. He ordered this Marshal, therefore, to be in the field at latest by the 15th of September, promising that a strong force should march in support of him in his rear, either under the command of General Decaen, who had replaced Marshal Macdonald in Catalonia, or under that of General Reille, commanding in Navarre, who was to receive two of the divisions of the reserve. When Valencia had been taken Napoleon flattered himself that Marshal Suchet would extend his action as far as Grenada, that the army of Andalusia would then advance almost wholly towards Estremadura, the moiety at least of this army would join that of

Portugal, increased to a force of fifty thousand men by the return to its ranks of the wounded and sick, and its detachments, and that thus seventy thousand men could enter Alentejo, whilst the army of the north, reinforced by two divisions of the reserve would descend upon the Tagus by the route followed by Masséna, and would form a junction with these seventy thousand men. By these means Napoleon hoped to be able to drive the English to the precipice which lay behind them, whilst they obstinately remained at Lisbon. But whilst he looked forward to such vast results he still entertained the idea of withdrawing his young guard, proposing, however, to replace it by Drouet's fourth battalion, marched back to Bayonne, and there filled with the conscripts of 1811 and 1812, which would compensate as far as regarded numbers, for the withdrawal of the guard.

Marshal Suchet was no less desirous to compass the conquest of Valencia than Napoleon himself. But of the forty thousand effective men whom alone he possessed of his sixty thousand nominally effective, he had lost four or five thousand in the siege of Tarragone and subsequent operations, and of the thirty-five thousand remaining he had to detach at least twelve or thirteen thousand to guard Aragon and lower Catalonia. He could only march, therefore, with twenty-two or twenty-three thousand men, and this was a very small number with which to attempt the conquest of Valencia. He had already advanced once to the very gates of this great city and had been able to judge of the difficulties of the undertaking; and Valencia was now defended by the whole of the Valencian army, by that of the insurgents of Murcia, and even by Blake's army, which, consisting of the two divisions Zayas and Lardizabal, had arrived from the banks of the Albueria in the previous month. But whatever were the difficulties in his way Marshal Suchet decided upon his course of action, left a division between Lerida, Tarragone, and Tortosa, under the orders of General Frère, for the protection of lower Catalonia, another on the Ebro, under General Musnier, to guard Aragon, and then marched with twenty-two thousand men upon Valencia. According to his custom, he had bestowed the greatest attention upon the organization of his commissariat and artillery services. Tortosa, at the mouths of the Ebro, was still his great dépôt, containing the siege train, now repaired, which he had used in the capture of Tarragone, and vast magazines of the excellent grain of Aragon; and it was from thence that, following the route which runs along the coast from Tortosa to Valencia, he would obtain the necessary provisions and war matériel. For the supply of meat, however, it was arranged that each regiment should carry with it a flock of sheep.



These preparations having been made Marshal Soult departed on the 15th of September for Valencia; his troops marching in three columns. With the principal of these he followed the high road from Tortosa to Valencia, whilst the Italian division Palombini proceeded to the right by the mountains of Morella a san Mateo, and Harispe's French division crossed still more to the right the mountains of Teruel. It was arranged that the three columns should unite in front of Murviedro, at the entrance of the plain named Huerta de Valence.

The army met with no serious obstacle in any direction, and drove before it all the roving bands which infested the country. On the 20th of September the three columns united in the environs of Castellon de la plana. On the 21st they met with some hundreds of Spaniards at the passage of the Minjarès, a torrent which descends from the mountains to the sea, whom the dragoons speedily dispersed, and on the 22nd they arrived on the borders of the magnificent semi-circular plain of Valencia, which is girdled by a chain of fine mountains, covered with palm, orange and olive trees, and bounded by a glittering ocean on whose brink arises Valencia with its numerous towers. On entering by the north, (the army descended from the north, southwards) the first obstacle which presented itself was the city of Murviedro, an open town, but built at the foot of the rock on which formerly stood the ancient Saguntum, and on which there remained a fortress, of a structure partly Roman, partly Arabesque, and partly Spanish. This fortress was garrisoned with three thousand men, well furnished with all kinds of stores, and our army could scarcely leave them in its rear whilst proceeding to attack Valencia, defended by a whole army.

On the 23rd Marshal Suchet took Murviedro with the division Habert, and the operation was not a very difficult one, although the garrison of Saguntum descended from its stronghold to endeavour to save the town at its foot. Having thus become masters of Murviedro, our troops, in spite of a vigorous fire from the fortress, established themselves in the houses which faced it, and barricaded them, and from these forced the garrison to remain shut up in their fortress. After a careful examination of this fortress, it was found to be inaccessible on all sides, except on the west, on which side it joined the mountains which form the enceinte of the plain of Valencia. On this side a gentle slope led to the first works, which consisted of a high and solid tower, which barred the rock on which the fortress was built, and which was connected by strong walls with other towers forming the

enceinte. As the formation of the ground presented almost insurmountable obstacles to the formation of regular approaches, and as the utmost confidence could be reposed in the troops which had carried out successfully such extraordinary assaults, it was resolved to attempt to carry the place by escalade. On the 28th of September, therefore, at midnight, two columns of three hundred chosen men, provided with scaling ladders, and supported by reserves, approached the fortress on the side which appeared most easy to escalade. By a singular chance the garrison had selected this same night for the execution of a sortie. The sortie was vigorously repulsed, but the incident served as a warning to the garrison, and there was no longer any use in attempting a surprise. Unfortunately, however, the columns selected for the assault, being filled with unrestrainable ardour, could not, in the midst of the confusion attendant on the repulse of the sortie, be withheld; and the first column planted its ladders and boldly attempted to reach the summit of its walls. But the ladders were not of the necessary length, nor sufficiently numerous, and the enemy was aware of the attempt; at every point, therefore, at which a ladder was planted, a crowd of furious men struck down with musketry, pikes, and hatchets, the bold assailants who attempted to scale their walls. The second column attempting to renew the attack was repulsed in the same way; and this hardy attempt, which had been planned as a means of economising time and bloodshed, cost us about three hundred men in killed and wounded, without any useful result.

Much distressed at this check, Marshal Suchet now perceived that he must proceed by the ordinary methods. A regular siege appeared indispensable for the capture of the rock of Saguntum, and it was asked whether it might not be better to mask this obstacle by a simple detachment, and to march forthwith upon Valencia. But the Marshal having already left in his rear two of the enemy's fortresses named Peniscola and Oropesa, did not dare to neglect a third fortress, containing a garrison of three thousand men, and was anxious to capture it before carrying his operations any further.

It was now necessary to bring the heavy siege artillery from Tortosa, and on this account to capture the fortress Oropesa, which completely intercepted the route. General Compère, therefore, was ordered to proceed with the Neapolitans, numbering fifteen hundred men, to Oropesa, and with the first pieces of heavy artillery which should arrive from Tortosa to overthrow its walls and open the route. The Neapolitans, accordingly, under the direction of French en-

gineers, opened the approaches, and carried them forward with much ardour and intrepidity. On the 9th of October the breaching battery was placed in position, armed with some heavy pieces of artillery, and an opening made in the principal tower. The little garrison which defended it was unwilling to await the chances of an assault, and surrendered on the 10th of October. The park of heavy artillery could now be brought, therefore, without interruption to the camp under Murviedro.

The Generals Valée and Rogniat, having returned to the army from which they had been absent for a time by permission, arranged the plan for the attack of the fortress of Saguntum, and decided that it should be conducted on the west, that is to say, by the slopes which join the rock of Saguntum to the mountains. The trenches had to be dug in a very hard soil, which was often a bare rock, and in a situation exposed to walls and elevated towers, from which the enemy could place hors de combat forty or fifty of our men a day; and whilst our troops were employed in the difficult works of the approaches, the chiefs of the bands which infested the mountains of Teruel, Calatayud, and Cuenca, situated between the provinces of Aragon and Valencia, were more active than ever, attacking our posts, and carrying off our cattle.

Impatient to triumph over this terrible obstacle which prevented its advance, the army was anxious to be permitted to attempt an assault as soon as possible. But the establishment of batteries under a continual fire from the enemy had caused infinite trouble and serious losses, and a breach could not be effected until the 17th of October. Our artillery, skilfully directed, destroyed the first bastions; but there was ancient masonry in the walls which was as hard as a rock, and above them the Spaniards, animated with the utmost energy, careless of the fire of our battery, took aim at our artillerymen, and destroyed them man by man, and thus frustrated our efforts.

At length, on the afternoon of the 18th although still presenting an escarpment sufficiently difficult to surmount, the breach was declared practicable, and the assault was ordered. The Spaniards standing in the breach and on the summit of the tower in which it was made, were armed with muskets and hatchets, and shouted the most furious cries. Colonel Matis with 400 select men of the 5th léger, and the 11th and 117th of the line, and the Italian division, advanced boldly under the most tremendous fire. But in spite of the courage of the assailants the breach was so steep, and the enemy's fire so vigorous, that the soldiers who attempted to climb over the



ruins were beaten down and they were forced to renounce the attempt after a fresh loss of two hundred men in killed or wounded. Thus this fatal citadel of Saguntum, taking into account the loss consequent on the first escalade and the losses during the progress of the works, had already cost us seven or eight hundred men, without any result. In the meantime the Valencian army, perceiving from the midst of the plain what was taking place at Saguntum, felt increased confidence in its walls, and having seen the unavailing attempts against Valencia of Marshal Moncey in 1808, and of General Suchet in 1810, flattered themselves that this new attempt would have a similar result.

It was upon this army, so full of self-complacency, that General Suchet determined to wreak his vengeance, and by its utter defeat expiate the check inflicted on him by the determined garrison of Saguntum. He considered, moreover, that the defeat of this army in the open field would be a source of so much discouragement to the enemy, that it might lead by its simple moral effect, to the simultaneous capture of both Saguntum and Valencia. But he was unwilling for the purpose of meeting the enemy's army, to withdraw too far from Saguntum or to approach Valencia too closely, and he was seeking for a suitable position on which to meet it, when General Blake himself offered him the opportunity he desired.

The garrison of Saguntum, whilst causing us serious losses, had also suffered them; its energetic spirit began to fail, it anxiously awaited relief, and demanded it by signals with the vessels which passed along the coast. General Blake had not less than thirty thousand men, amongst which were the divisions Zayas and Lardizabal, the best troops in Spain; and had been joined, moreover, by the Murcians under General Mahy, and the brave partisan Villa-Campa.

He now advanced, therefore, into the midst of the plain, withdrawing from Valencia and approaching Saguntum as though he were about to meet the enemy in battle. Marshal Suchet was much rejoiced when he perceived these dispositions and made preparations for an engagement. On the morning of the 25th of October the two armies were face to face.

General Blake placed on his right, beyond a ravine named Picador, and along the shore, the division Zayas, which the Spanish flotilla was to support by its fire; in the centre, the division Lardizabal, supported by the whole of the Spanish cavalry, under General Caro; and on his left, the Valencian division Mirinda, that of the partisan Villa-Campa; and finally, even beyond his left, with the intention of turning us



by the mountains, the troops of Mahy. These troops amounted, as we have said, to thirty thousand men, as good soldiers as Spain could furnish. The remainder of his troops had been left for the protection of Valencia.

General Suchet's troops only numbered sixteen or eighteen thousand men, for he had been compelled to leave a certain number before Saguntum; but these sixteen or eighteen thousand amply compensated by their valour for their inferiority in number. On his left, and towards the sea he posted Habert's division, opposite the division Zayas; in the centre he opposed Harispe's division, the Italian division Palombini, the 4th hussars, the 13th cuirassiers, and the 24th dragoons to the division Lardizabal; finally, on his right he placed the brigades Robert and Chlopiski, and the Italian dragoons, to hold in check the troops of Miranda, Villa-Campa, and Mahy, which threatened to cut us off from the Tortosa route, our only line of retreat. Our artillery, and the Neapolitan infantry were to continue the attack on the towers of Saguntum during the battle.

At daybreak, the army of General Blake commenced its movement, and Marshal Suchet crossing at that moment the field of battle with a squadron of the 4th hussars, perceived Lardizabal's Spaniards advancing in the centre with order and precision, upon a mamelon which would serve as a point d'appui to our whole line; and he immediately ordered Harispe's division to proceed thither, and as the Spaniards had the start, threw upon them his squadron of hussars to check their movement. The hussars, however, although they charged with great bravery were repulsed by the Spaniards, who boldly mounted upon the mamelon and established themselves there. General Harispe, who arrived when the mamelon was already taken, marched thither at the head of the 7th of the line, and left in reserve the 116th of the line with the 3rd of the Vistula. The Spaniards received the charge of our troops with a very vigorous fire, and more firmness than usual, but the 7th of the line attacked them at the bayonet's point and overwhelmed them. The whole of Harispe's division then deployed in front of Lardizabal's division, which had paused whilst the two wings of the Spanish army continued to gain ground. Marshal Soult determined immediately to take advantage of this situation to cut off the Spanish army by the centre; and with this purpose sent forward Harispe's division, whilst he kept back on the other hand Habert's division on his left, and the brigades Robert and Chlopiski on his right.

Whilst these orders were in the course of execution, Duchand, commander of the squadron of artillery, having

carried forward with much boldness the artillery of Harispe's division, in order to throw grape upon Lardizabal's infantry, was charged by the whole body of General Caro's cavalry. The hussars who attempted to sustain the charge were driven back, and many of our pieces fell into the power of the Spaniards, who, little accustomed to take prizes, expressed their joy on the occasion with loud shouts. At the same moment all Lardizabal's infantry marched towards us with the greatest confidence. But the 116th advanced to meet General Caro's cavalry, checked them with its weight, and then the brave 13th cuirassiers led by General Bousard, threw themselves on the Spanish infantry and broke and sabred them. From this moment the enemy's centre pierced by our troops was compelled to retreat; and not only did we retake the French guns, but also a portion of the Spanish artillery, and many prisoners, amongst whom was General Caro himself.

The two wings of the army which had at first been withheld were now advanced by Marshal Suchet, who in spite of a wound in the shoulder declined to quit the field of battle, and placed in line with the centre. General Habert, whose troops were opposed to the division Zayas, drove it at the first charge to the village Pouzol, and there having driven it still further to the heights of Puig, carried these heights themselves with the bayonet, whilst Colonel Delort, uniting the left with the centre, charged at the head of the 24th dragoons the remainder of Lardizabal's infantry. On the right Generals Robert and Chlopiski repulsed the troops commanded by Mating, and the Italian dragoons completely routed them by a vigorous charge.

Defeated thus at every point, the Spaniards retreated in disorder, leaving in our hands twelve pieces of cannon, four thousand seven hundred prisoners, a thousand dead, and four flags; whilst on our side we had lost in this struggle, in which the Spaniards fought more desperately than they usually fought in the open field, about seven hundred in killed and wounded. The chief results of the battle were that it destroyed the prestige of the Valencian army, discouraged the garrison of Saguntum, and dissipated the vain glorious confidence felt by the inhabitants of Valencia in their walls.

After he had collected the trophies of his victory, the Marshal summoned the garrison of Saguntum, which the defeat of the Spanish army had deprived of all hope of relief; and it consented to capitulate, surrendering into our hands two thousand five hundred prisoners, the remainder of the three thousand men by whom, at the commencement of the siege, the fortress had been defended. This first result of

the battle of Saguntum was a source of great satisfaction to Marshal Suchet, who now found himself master of the plain of Valencia by reason of the solid point d'appui which he had now acquired there, and who had, moreover, in the town of Murviedro a safe place of protection for his siege train, his sick, and his stores. Possessing, moreover, on the grand Tortosa route fort Oropesa, which alone commanded the road, he was perfectly secure of his line of communication up to the Ebro.

It now became an important object with General Suchet to disengage his rear from the bands which had taken advantage of his advance to assail the entire circle of the frontiers of Aragon. L'Empecinado and Duran, replacing Villacampa, had overpowered the garrison of Calatayud; Mina sallying from Navarre, although pursued by several columns of French troops, had seized an entire battalion of Italians; and the Catalans, retaking Mont-Serrat had rendered very difficult the position of Frere's division, which was charged with the duty of keeping watch over Lerida, Tarragone, and Tortosa. The Marshal, therefore, made various necessary movements of troops in his rear; and marched his prisoners under the escort of a strong brigade towards the Pyrenees, whilst he sent couriers after couriers to Paris to make known his situation and his need of prompt aid.

It was now necessary that he should cross the Guadalaviar, a rapid little stream on the bank of which is built Valencia, for the purpose of investing this vast city, which was occupied by a numerous army, and which, independently of its old enceinte was still further protected by an uninterrupted line of earth entrenchments, bristling with artillery, and forming a vast entrenched camp. To these defences were added a multitude of irregular canals, large, deep, and full of running water, which were the riches of Valencia during peace, as they were its defence in war. There were obstacles, therefore, which the seventeen thousand men, who were all that remained with Marshal Suchet after the despatch of a brigade as an escort for the prisoners, were insufficient to overcome.

Whilst awaiting the reinforcements he had solicited and which he hoped to receive from Navarre, the Marshal employed the month of November in blockading Valencia, advancing Habert's division to the left as far as Grao, a port of Valencia, and seizing the faubourg Serranos, in spite of a most vigorous resistance on the part of the Spaniards, who defended it foot by foot. This faubourg was separated from the town itself by the Guadalaviar, and our troops took, by having first entered by sapping and mining, the three great convents that commanded it. Ascending towards the right



along the Guadalaviar, they also seized some villages which were on its left bank, that which we occupied, and fortified themselves there. We had thus created a long line of circumvallation from the sea to beyond Valencia, and to complete the envelopment of this city it only required that our troops should cross the Guadalaviar in front of General Blake, force the canals with which the plain was furrowed, and shut up the army of succour within the walls of the city itself. The Marshal, however, delayed this operation, which would necessarily be followed by the assault of the entrenched camp and the old wall, until the arrival of the reinforcements which had been promised, and which he momentarily expected.

Napoleon, in fact, on receiving news of the battle of Saguntum, believed that the whole fate of the Spanish war was concentrated around Valencia, and that the destinies of the Peninsula depended on the capture of this important place. It is certain, indeed, that the conquest of this city, which for many years had resisted all our attacks, succeeding that of Tarragone, would have produced a great moral effect on the Peninsula, and almost as great as that which would have been caused by the conquest of Cadiz, although far less than that which would have resulted from the occupation of Lisbon, since the capture of this latter city would suppose the defeat of the English. Napoleon desired, therefore, that everything should be subordinate, and almost sacrificed to this important object.

By his dispatch of the 20th of November he ordered General Reille to quit Navarre immediately, however necessary it might be to keep Mina in check, and to enter Aragon with the two divisions of reserve which were under his orders, whilst General Caffarelli replaced him in Navarre; and this latter General was in his turn replaced in Biscay by General Dorsenne. At the same time he ordered Joseph to send forward a division upon Cuenca; Marmont, although so distant from Valencia, to detach under General Montbrun a division of infantry and one of cavalry to join at Cuenca that which should be sent by Joseph; and finally, Marshal Suchet to advance a corps as far as Murcia. He wrote to all, what was indeed true, but with great exaggeration, namely, that the English had a great number of sick, as many as eighteen thousand, he said; that they were on this account incapable of undertaking any movement, and that the Castilles, Estremadura, and Andalusia, could therefore be without danger stripped of their troops; that Valencia was the only important point, and that when it had once been taken a vast number of troops might then be set free to act from east to west with the utmost vigour against the English.



These orders, expressed with great precision and in the most imperious terms, were better executed than usual, and in accordance with the species of fatality attending the Spanish war, this punctual obedience was only obtained on the occasion when it was undesirable, for General Reille would have sufficed to enable General Suchet to perform his task. However this might be, General Reille held in check the guerilla bands, entered it himself with a French division, and marched at the head of these two divisions upon Valencia by the Teruel road. General Caffarelli replaced him in Navarre. In the meantime Joseph, who expected great results from the capture of Valencia, willingly deprived himself of a portion of his army, and directed upon Cuenca the division Darmagnac; whilst Marshal Marmont, who grew weary of his state of inaction on the Tagus, and who would have rejoiced to march himself upon Valencia, not having been authorized to proceed thither in person, despatched General Montbrun with two divisions, one of infantry and one of cavalry. Marshal Soult, however, replied to Napoleon's order that he could not from the bottom of Andalusia aid Marshal Suchet in the kingdom of Valencia; and he was right. He acted accordingly, therefore, and sent nothing.

With much pleasure Marshal Suchet saw arrive successively more reinforcements than he had demanded, and towards the end of December learned that General Reille, an officer who was as intelligent as he was energetic, was approaching from Ségorbe with the Italian division Severoli, and with a French division composed of the best regiments of the old Neapolitan army; a force which amounted to fourteen or fifteen thousand men, and was accompanied by forty pieces of cannon. After having himself reviewed these troops at Ségorbe on the 24th of December, he returned to Valencia, and resolved to cross the Guadalaviar immediately for the purpose of completely investing the city, before General Blake could escape from it, or bring up a new division of General Freyre's which was said to be about to appear. He fixed on the 26th of December for the execution of this project, as General Reille would thus be able to occupy the left bank of the river which he was now about to abandon, and even to assist at the conclusion of the operation.

On the 26th of December, whilst a portion of Habert's division masked the faubourg de Serranos, the remainder of this division, advancing to the left, passed the stream towards its mouth, enveloped Valencia on the side of the sea, and took possession of a height called mount Olivete. In the centre and a little above Valencia the Italians of the division

Palombini, rushing through the water up to their middle passed the Guadalaviar at a ford, and, under the most vigorous fire, attacked the village of Mislata which was bravely defended, and protected by a deep canal named *Accquia de Favara*, the passage of which was of greater difficulty than that of the stream itself. To second this movement and completely envelope Valencia, General Harispe with his division crossed the Guadalaviar above the village Manisses at the point where were situated the prises of water which turned the course of the Guadalaviar into a thousand canals through the plain of Valencia; and Marshal Soult had calculated that General Harispe, avoiding thus the obstacle of the canals, would be able more speedily to turn Valencia, and effect the investment on the south.

The movement of General Harispe was a little delayed by his awaiting the arrival of General Reille, since he was unwilling to leave unsupported the numerous troops which remained on the left of the Guadalaviar. Without this support, indeed, General Blake, who was about to be blockaded on the right bank, would have been able to escape by the left bank by breaking through the feeble detachments there placed. As soon as the approach of the troops of General Reille was observed General Harispe pushed forward, fell on the rear of Mislata, released the Italians who were maintaining a most unequal combat, assisted them in the occupation of the disputed positions, then descended to the south of Valencia, and towards the end of the day completed its investment. During this circular movement around Valencia, General Mahy at the head of the insurgents of Murcia, and the partisan Villa Campa with his division, had withdrawn upon the Xucar and upon Alcira, being unwilling to be shut up in Valencia, and rightly judging that the troops of General Blake would be quite sufficient for its defence, could it be defended, and far too many to have to surrender, should it be forced to capitulate. The General in chief sent the dragoons in pursuit of these retreating troops, but the only end attained was the capture of a few prisoners.

This operation, now successfully executed, cost us about 400 men in killed and wounded, who were for the most part Italians, since the only resolute resistance had been at Mislata. It completed the investment of Valencia, and assured us, should we capture the city, of also capturing General Blake with twenty thousand men. But certainly if the Valencian population, amounting to sixty thousand, supported by twenty thousand regular troops, well provisioned, and defended by numerous and extensive works, were animated still by the sentiments which had inspired it in 1808 and

1809, it would be able to make a long resistance and cause us to pay dearly for its conquest. But the high spirited and sanguinary men who had slaughtered the French in 1808 were now either more peaceably disposed, or dispersed, or terrified.

Three years of civil and foreign war and courses lomtaines, sometimes in Murcia, sometimes in Catalonia, had fatigued this active and patriotic population, and worn out their passions. Valencia was now in the same state as Saragossa and many other parts of Spain. Provided those were disarmed who had adopted a taste for and habit of using arms, and a fondness for pillage, the remainder, suffering from the insupportable tyranny alternately exercised by each party, was ready to submit to a clement conqueror, with a reputation for honour, and bringing to them rather repose than slavery. The remembrance of the massacres committed on the French in 1808, which would have been a motive for resisting to the utmost a pitiless besieger, was on the contrary a reason for surrendering at once to an enemy whose gentleness was known, and who ought not to be forced to a severity contrary to his nature.

These sentiments, influencing the army of General Blake, prevented the adoption on any side of the resolution to destroy Valencia, as Saragossa had been destroyed, rather than surrender it to the enemy. Marshal Suchet had received information of this disposition, and desired to carry forward the approaches as rapidly as possible, in order to preserve the immediate submission of the city, for he was far from secure of retaining for any considerable time the concentration of force which was under his command. He resolved, therefore, to carry forward works against two points of the defence which offered circumstances favourable to an attack. At the commencement of January 1812, Henri the Colonel of Engineers, who had signalized himself in all the memorable sieges of Aragon and Catalonia, opened the trenches towards the south of the town, in front of an angle formed by a line of outer works, and to the south west in front of the faubourg Saint-Vincent. Within a few days the works had been pushed as far as the foot of the entrenchment, but with the loss of Colonel Henri, who was justly regretted by the whole army, on account of his courage and talents; and General Blake seeing no means for maintaining a desperate defence abandoned the outer line of defences and retired within the enceinte itself.

Marshal Suchet discerning very clearly the true state of affairs, immediately advanced under the walls, and placed in position a battery of mortars to overpower at once a

resistance which was already dying out. But if he were anxious to terrify the population it was far from his intention to destroy a city in whose wealth he hoped to find the chief resource of his army, and after having thrown into it some bombs which caused more consternation than harm, he summoned General Blake to surrender, and received from the latter an equivocal refusal. The bombardment continued simultaneously with the parlying, and on the 9th of January, 1812, the army of General Blake surrendered itself as prisoners of war to the number of eight thousand men. Marshal Soult entered Valencia in triumph, the just reward of wisely conceived combinations bravely executed, and fortunately aided by circumstances. The population received calmly, and almost with satisfaction, a chief of whose good government Aragon boasted, and was not sorry to have reached the conclusion of a war which at that time appeared to be solely advantageous to the English, who were as odious to the Spaniards as the French themselves.

Marshal Suchet hastened to introduce into the administration of the kingdom of Valencia the same order he had carried into that of the kingdom of Aragon. The populations both of Valencia and the neighbouring towns were disposed to submit to his authority, and he was able to calculate on a submission as complete as that he had obtained in Aragon. It was necessary, nevertheless, that he should retain sufficient troops to hold in check the turbulent portion of the populations, which had already thrown itself into the mountains, and prepared to take advantage of the dispersion of our forces, which was the necessary result of the extension of our occupation, to disturb Murcia, Cuenca, Aragon, and lower Catalonia.

The capture of Valencia succeeding that of Tarragone, was indisputably both fortunate and brilliant, and capable of exercising throughout the Peninsula, a considerable moral influence, but, on condition that our forces, so far from being diminished should be increased in proportion to the extended country they had to occupy; that the precipitate withdrawal of the large force which had been carried eastward, and which left the English at liberty in the west, should be promptly retrieved; and that the enemy should not be allowed time to take advantage of this, but should on the other hand be attacked at that very moment with the greatest possible energy. If, in fact, the army of the north had been sufficiently reinforced so as to be able not only to keep in check the guerilla bands but to cover Ciudad-Rodrigo; if the army of Portugal had been augmented sufficiently to invade either Beira or Alentejo, or, at least, to check Lord Wellington; if,



finally, the army of Andalusia had received sufficient reinforcements to enable it to take Cadiz, and to add the *éclat* of this conquest to that of the capture of Valencia; then a moiety of the army of Andalusia added to the whole army of Portugal, and a detachment of the army of the north, would have been able to drive the English upon Lisbon, and to blockade them in their lines until the proper moment should have arrived for a great effort to take them. Unfortunately these conditions could not be fulfilled but with extreme difficulty at the present moment, when every care had a direction towards the Vistula instead of towards the Tagus; and Napoleon was, moreover, about to order that as soon as Valencia should have been taken, General Reille was to enter Aragon with his two divisions, to leave General Caffarelli at liberty to re-enter Castille, and the imperial guard at liberty to re-enter France.

Thus Valencia had scarcely been taken when General Reille retraced his steps, and Marshal Suchet found himself reduced to his own forces, which were sufficient, indeed, for the government of Valencia, but quite insufficient to undertake any distant expedition, or to act as far as Murcia and Grenada. He took advantage, however, of this withdrawal of troops to get rid of his prisoners, and sent them to France.

Napoleon who had at first desired, after the capture of Valencia, to direct against the English an overwhelming force, and with this purpose to leave his guard in Castille during the whole of the winter at least, had now resigned that idea, pressed as he was by certain circumstances, which we shall presently have to narrate, to march his armies on the Vistula, and he resolved to recall immediately his guard, the Poles, the cadres of a certain number of fourth battalions, and a portion of his dragoons. Towards the close of December, therefore, he demanded his young guard of General Dorsenne, which caused a diminution of at least twelve thousand men; and demanded of Marshals Suchet and Soult the regiments of the Vistula, which caused a fresh withdrawal of seven or eight thousand Polish troops, excellent soldiers; and this diminution of force was especially damaging to Marshal Suchet, who remained with fifteen thousand men in the kingdom of Valencia. He recalled, also, the fourth battalions which had composed the 9th corps, and which belonged almost entirely to the regiments of the army of Andalusia, and this was a fresh withdrawal of two or three thousand men who were much to be regretted for their distinguished qualities as soldiers. Finally, Napoleon recalled twelve regiments of dragoons of the twenty-four employed in Spain.

The result of these measures was the withdrawal from Spain of twenty-five thousand of the best troops. And this was not all; for Napoleon, no longer designing the march of two combined armies upon Lisbon, advancing one by the Beira, the other by the Alentejo, but being especially anxious to guard against an offensive movement of the English in Castille, which might have imperilled our line of communication, changed, at the very moment of the capture of Valencia, the destination of Marshal Marmont, and drew him from the banks of the Tagus to the banks of the Douro, causing him to repass the Guadarrama. He had ordered him to quit Almaraz, and to establish himself at Salamanca with the six divisions of the army of Portugal, to which he had added a seventh, that of General Souham, which was one of the four of reserve. The division Bonnet was to form the eighth. General Caffarelli, now returned from Navarre, which he had occupied for a moment during the movement of General Reille upon Valencia, had succeeded General Dorsenne in the command of the army of the north; and was to receive, as compensation for the withdrawal of the guard, one of the four divisions of the reserve, and at the same time to cover Madrid if the enemy should attempt to proceed thither, as they had done at the time of the battle of Talavera. Finally, as it was the departure of the guard which determined the new position assigned to the army of Portugal, Marshal Marmont was ordered to conform immediately to the instructions which he had received.

At the moment when these orders reached him, however, Marshal Marmont was in a state of embarrassment which prevented him from obeying them, for, in accordance with the extreme precipitancy with which the concentration of the forces towards Valencia had been conducted, he had been ordered to dispatch General Montbrun with two divisions, one of infantry and the other of cavalry; and General Montbrun, instead of stopping at Cuenca, as the division Darmagnac sent by Joseph, and waiting until it was necessary that he should go further, had acted quite otherwise. Taking advantage of his liberty and the season which was favorable to the performance of marches, he advanced as far as the very gates of Alicante, which, although ready to open to Marshal Suchet, were not so to him.

General Montbrun might have committed a fault, very excusable in the case of such a character as his, but whether wrong or not, less than eighty or a hundred leagues from Almaraz, and whilst he was so far removed with a third of the army of Portugal, it was a difficult thing for Marshal Marmont to quit the Tagus with the two other thirds, and

thus to place additional distance between himself and his principal lieutenant. However, Marshal Marmont, although capable of judging of the merit of the orders he received, executed them because he was obedient, and less animated with personal passions than most of his comrades. Moreover, he had received information that the English, repulsed before Ciudad-Rodrigo at the end of the preceding September, were preparing a new attempt against this place, and he commenced to march his troops from the banks of the Tagus to the banks of the Douro, and to remove his head quarters from Naval-Moral to Salamanca. In order to guard against the inconveniences of this strange situation he removed at first only his hospitals, matériel, and two divisions, and left two divisions on the Tagus to assist General Montbrun; and with more than usual forethought prepared at Salamanca a second store of artillery for the troops whom he left on the Tagus, that they might, in case of urgent need, rejoin him by routes which were very short but impracticable for artillery.

We now see how singular and perilous was the situation created by the precipitate determination first to carry all the troops towards Valencia, and then to draw them back towards Castille in order to prepare for the departure of the troops destined for Russia; and the English must have been very indolent or very ill informed had they neglected such advantageous opportunities. Lord Wellington, although by no means fertile in ingenious and bold combinations, was, nevertheless, careful to seize favorable occasions. He never created them, but he seized them, and this is in general sufficient, for those which fortune offers are generally the safest, whilst we can only create them for ourselves at the risk of much hazard and peril.

We have already explained how, being compelled to do something, and having no better enterprise open to him than the siege of Ciudad-Rodrigo, or Badajoz, Lord Wellington was lying in wait on a well opened route, ready to throw himself on one of these two fortresses as soon as he could believe that he had before him twenty or five and twenty days in which to conduct a siege; and this space of twenty-five days was secured to him by the concentration of all the French forces upon Valencia, which he knew to have become the sole source of care to the court of Madrid. Before Marshal Marmont could be informed, before he could recall General Montbrun, and set his whole army in motion, before General Caffarelli could return from Navarre to reinforce the army of Portugal; before, in fact, forty thousand men could be led under the walls of Ciudad-Rodrigo, Lord Wel-

lington would certainly have time to attack and take this fortress. He had, moreover, already transported thither the necessary siege materials, had not quitted the environs since the revictualling accomplished by Marshal Marmont and General Dorsenne, had employed his time in the care of his sick, and had quietly collected a great park of heavy artillery. In fact, no preliminary operation had been left unprepared, and he would be able on the day succeeding his first march to commence the siege, the accomplishment of which was the object of his ambition, and he determined to undertake it without loss of time.

Before the cruel surprise which was preparing for us as a punishment for our faults, there had already arisen a most bitter disagreement on account of the expedition attempted by the division Girard to Arroyo del Molinos. We have seen that Marshal Soult had left General Drouet at Merida to watch Estremadura. General Drouet no longer commanded the 9th corps which had been distributed amongst the divisions of the army of Andalusia, but the 5th, the command of which had become vacant by the return to France of Marshal Mortier. Marshal Soult had authorized him to extend as far as the environs of Caceres the levy of the contributions, and General Girard, placed at the head of one of the divisions of the corps, a very energetic but rather careless officer, had advanced as far as the city of Caceres itself, in the basin of the Tagus, whilst the corps to which it belonged was at Merida upon the Guadiana. It was very imprudent to send him so far and as imprudent on his part not to have been more careful in so hazardous a position. The English General, Hill, was at no great distance, in the direction of port Alègre, and being urged by Lord Wellington not to remain inactive, seized with empressement the occasion which offered itself, and which was a most favourable one, for he had but to quietly ascend the basin of the Tagus to be able to cut off the too confident General from his line of communication with the Guadiana; and he performed this operation, arriving on the 27th of October close to General Girard's rear. The latter had been warned of the danger which he incurred, but with the rashness of his improvident courage had replied to General Briche who gave the warning; "you seem to see the English everywhere;" a most offensive remark and very little deserved by the brave General to whom it was addressed. General Girard, however, perceiving the necessity of retracing his steps, had already sent forward one of his two brigades, and with the second waited on the morning of the 28th near Arroyo del Molinos the arrival of the Alcade of Caceres who had promised to bring the



thousand ounces which had been levied on the city, when he was convinced too late of his injustice towards General Briche.

Surrounded by more than 10,000 men, of whom 10,000 were English and 4000 were Portuguese, he endeavoured to compensate for his imprudence by his valour, and contrived to extricate himself by the sacrifice of a battalion of the rear guard composed of select companies, having an officer at its head named Voirol, who had distinguished himself at Albuera. This battalion, surrounded on all sides, defended itself with heroic courage, but was overwhelmed and compelled to surrender; and this cruelly rash enterprise thus cost us nearly two thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and was a real subject for congratulation with the English, since it furnished them with a remarkable fact to compensate for the inaction of the summer, and to employ the public mind in England, which had hitherto brooded on the repulses before Badajoz and the last revictualling of Ciudad-Rodrigo by the French. General Girard was sent by General Drouet to Marshal Soult, and by Marshal Soult to the Emperor, to render an account of his conduct; and his superiors, had they been just, when they accused him of imprudence should have accused themselves of imprudence which was at least as great as his.

We were unfortunately to suffer still greater mischances, and all by reason of the same want of vigilance which had been so fatal during the last war, and Ciudad-Rodrigo, of which, as we have said, Lord Wellington designed the siege during the concentration of our forces in the direction of Valencia, was to furnish us with another instance of its effects. This fortress, situated between the army of the north and the army of Portugal, was confided to the care of two officers, Marshal Marmont and General Dorsenne; of whom the latter, however, to whom had been entrusted the duty of supplying the garrison with provisions, was more particularly responsible. But although very capable of commanding a division in the open field General Dorsenne knew nothing respecting the defence of a fortress, and had entrusted to General Barrié, who knew even less, the defence of Ciudad-Rodrigo, and gave him eighteen hundred men to defend a place of which the defence required at least five thousand. The French had employed twenty-four days in the siege of Ciudad-Rodrigo when defended by six thousand Spaniards, well provided with all kinds of stores and as brave as fanatics. But how long would eighteen hundred French troops be able to defend it, when destitute of stores and regarding themselves as sacrificed by the negligence of their chiefs? General Dor-

senne failed to ask himself this question, and being aware that he had some months before, in company with Marshal Marmont, carried provisions to Ciudad-Rodrigo, scarcely thought any more respecting the matter.

General Barrié, however, having learned the true state of affairs, had not failed, at the close of December, to inform the commander of the army of the north of the enemy's movements, which, although very carefully concealed, were nevertheless very apparent, to announce that the provisions of the place would be exhausted in February, that the garrison was very insufficient for its defence, and that it must speedily fall before any serious attack. These messages were received as General Briche's advice had been received by General Girard, as the importunity of an officer who was always complaining, demanding more than he needed, and more than could be granted him. The conduct of a superior is always imitated, and Napoleon having treated his Generals in this manner, there was now scarcely an officer who did not behave towards his inferiors in the same way.

The fortress was, therefore, left to itself with a garrison of 1,800 men, now reduced to 1,500 by sickness, desertion, and daily skirmishes against the Spanish scouts in the neighbouring country. The breach by which the French had entered had been repaired, but with dry stone, in default of other materials. On the mamelon called le grand Teso, had been constructed a redoubt of little strength, and the exterior convents of Saint Francis and Saint Cruz had been occupied by two hundred men, which reduced by that number the garrison left to guard the walls.

Lord Wellington, after he had secretly conveyed his siege train near the frontier, crossed it on the 8th of January, 1812, hoping that before the return of the troops sent to Valencia, by the army of Portugal, and to Navarre by the army of the north, he should have carried a place wanting in all means of defence, as Ciudad-Rodrigo appeared to be at that moment.

Having crossed the Agueda on the 8th and invested the fortress, he determined to carry the lunette on le grand Teso in the evening. Armed with three cannon, and guarded by five hundred men, it was incapable of offering any very great resistance, and the troops of the unfortunate detachment which defended it were either taken or slain. Immediately afterwards Lord Wellington, who had not less than forty thousand troops under his command, commenced the siege works, and enveloped the place in trenches from the convent of Santa Cruz to that of Saint François. To attack that portion of the walls which had been breached by the French

was a mere matter of course, and the approaches were conducted towards that point; and as the convents of Saint Cruz and Saint François took the English trenches in flank, it was resolved to carry them by assault; by no means a difficult undertaking, as there were less than fifty soldiers in the one, and one hundred and fifty in the other. The former was attacked on the night of the 13th, and the fifty men who occupied it being insufficient for its defence, retired, after having done their best. General Barrié made a sortie to retake this post and succeeded in his attempt, but was compelled to evacuate it again before the attack of a multitude of assailants. The convent of Saint François was of more importance to the enemy, for it commanded the left of the English trenches, by which Lord Wellington designed to undertake a second attack. The hundred and fifty men who guarded this convent, assailed by an overwhelming force, and threatened with being isolated from the city, retired after having spiked their cannon. A more extensive experience in the defence of fortresses would have taught General Barrié that to attempt to defend detached posts with so few men, was to sacrifice troops uselessly. At the same time it must be added that had he even confined his efforts to the defence of the fortress itself, he could not very considerably have prolonged its defence with the force at his disposal.

All the outer works having been taken, Lord Wellington directed twenty-six cannon against the old breach, and in a few hours the uncemented stones began to fall away with frightful celerity, and the breach speedily became practicable. The besieged here, as at Badajoz, taking advantage of the habit of the English to open a breach before having destroyed the counterscarp, bravely attempted to clear the foot of the walls. But being very weak in numbers, and ill covered by the counterscarp and the glacis, they were speedily driven away by the enemy's fire, and the English artillery was able by accumulating ruins at the foot of the breach again to create the slope. Lord Wellington had learned at Badajoz what it was to attempt the assault of places defended by French troops, and perceived that to render an assault successful it would be necessary to divide the attention of the besieged by simultaneous attacks. He established, therefore, a new breaching battery, on the left of his trenches towards the convent of Saint François, and the artillery of the fortress, although it caused much damage to the new works, being incapable of resisting the overwhelming fire directed against it, a second breach was speedily effected at this point, and although not extensive was deemed practicable.

General Barrié, who had decided to perish sword in hand,



took the ordinary measures to resist the assault. He had a double entrenchment raised behind the breaches, flanked them with cannon loaded with grape, placed on their summits bomb shells which were to be rolled down upon the enemy by hand, and posted chosen troops behind them. Having only a thousand men available for the defence, and there being two breaches to defend and the whole circuit of the fortress to guard, the only reserve he had against a column which might have forced the wall consisted of a hundred men. Nevertheless, when summoned to surrender by the English General, he replied that he would die upon the ramparts, and would never capitulate; and this determination is worthy of all honour, for in the state to which the fortress was now reduced he might have capitulated in full accordance with the most honourable rules regulating the defence of fortresses.

On the night of the 18th of January Lord Wellington threw two columns upon the two breaches, and placed reserves in proper positions to support them. The column directed against the great breach on the right, after having run completely exposed to the brink of the fosse and dashed into it, attempted to climb up the ruins of the fallen wall, and were many times driven back by the grape shot, grenades, and musketry directed against them from the fortress; and General Barrié, who was at this spot because it was the one most seriously threatened, could flatter himself for a moment that the defence had been successful. At this moment, summoned by a great clamour to the little breach, and supposing that it had been carried, he ran thither with his reserve, and finding that it was a false alarm, returned to the great breach. But the second English column after having been repulsed from the little breach returned in force, overpowered the voltigeurs who defended it, and penetrated into the tower. On this occasion General Barrié, supposing it to be another false alarm, failed to advance with sufficient speed, and his column which defended the great breach being taken à revers, was compelled to lay down its arms. The garrison and its commander had protracted their resistance to the utmost, and they can only be reproached with a few errors, the avoidance of which could not have rendered the defence successful. The town, although an English ally, was pillaged, Lord Wellington being forced to permit this act of barbarity to the temper of his troops. We have a profound respect for the English nation and its valiant army, but we must be permitted to observe that French soldiers never need such a stimulant as this.

Ciudad-Rodrigo, attacked on the 8th of January, had



thus fallen into the hands of the enemy on the evening of the 18th, and had, therefore, been taken within a space of ten days. Such a result may appear extraordinary, but the ruined state of the fortifications, the insufficiency of the garrison, the great number of the besiegers, and, we must add, the prodigality with which Lord Wellington expended the lives of his men, of which he took so much care in the open field, sufficiently explain the promptitude of this success, which cost the English army thirteen or fourteen thousand men in killed or wounded, and some of its most distinguished officers, especially the brave and hardy Crawford, who commanded the light division. The English having no special artillery troops, and their engineers, although very intelligent, being but little versed in the profound art of Vauban, neglecting the usual means of approach, had trusted the fate of the siege to assaults. This system, which had failed before Badajoz, which had succeeded before Ciudad-Rodrigo by means of many simultaneous attacks, is a mode of proceeding which requires a considerable army, the sacrifice of an immense number of men, and great energy, and which, notwithstanding the presence of these necessary advantages, is very liable to defeat before a numerous and resolute garrison.

The promptitude of the capture of Ciudad-Rodrigo was as a thunder-stroke to the commander of the armies of the North and of Portugal, and the staff at Madrid. The latter being the less surprised, since it had blamed the conveyance of all the disposable troops towards Valencia, of which Lord Wellington took so much advantage. The person most grieved was Marshal Marmont. At the moment when he received the news, which was on the 10th of January, of the commencement of the siege, he was proceeding from the banks of the Tagus to the banks of the Douro, relying upon the protraction of the defence to at least twenty days; and he hoped before the expiration of this period to have assembled five, or even six or seven of his own divisions, and to have obtained twelve or fifteen thousand auxiliary troops from the army of the north, by which means he would have been able to march to the relief of the besieged fortress at the head of forty thousand men. But the negligence of General Dorsenne, who was charged with the protection of Ciudad-Rodrigo, had very much abridged the time during which it was possible for the garrison to prolong the siege; and we must add that Marshal Marmont himself, in proposing to succour the place in twenty days, had not sufficiently considered the accidents which so frequently disappoint the most careful calculations. Nevertheless, although of a character naturally very generous, Marshal Marmont permitted

himself to declare that General Barrié was a miserable fellow who had not known how to defend the post committed to his care.

The despair of the Generals of the North and of Portugal on learning the result of the siege of Ciudad-Rodrigo may easily be conceived, for old Castille was now unprotected, and our line of communication was exposed to the attempts of a solid army, which we had never yet really defeated, and which now began to lay aside its usual circumspection.

Marshal Marmont, who was excessively vigilant in everything which directly concerned himself, perceived the danger of his position, and seeing that Ciudad-Rodrigo was lost, was eager to supply its place by defensive works at Salamanca, which had become the capital of his government, and which was to be at a later period the scene of a bloody battle. He displayed much activity and intelligence in the plan of these works, making use of three large convents situated around Salamanca to supply the place of regular fortifications, which this city was without, and established there a sort of entrenched camp which a resolute troop would be able to defend for a considerable time. He also bestowed great pains on the establishment of magazines and hospitals.

The troops of General Montbrun had at length returned, but Marshal Marmont, although having now at his disposal seven fine infantry divisions and two of cavalry, could by no means regard with tranquillity the task before him. His infantry numbered about forty-four thousand men, and at least ten thousand were necessary to guard the bridge of Almaraz on the Tagus, the cols de Banols and de Peralès on the Guadarrama, Zamora on the Douro, Leon and Astorga towards the Asturias, he was able to march at the head of only thirty-four thousand infantry, and his whole army, including the cavalry and artillery, numbered about forty thousand combatants, whilst the English army numbered about sixty thousand, of whom half were English and half Portuguese. It would not have been prudent to have attempted to meet such an army as the latter even with fifty thousand men, and most assuredly not if they had not been all at hand, well clothed, well armed, well fed, and if they had been detached upon a number of accessory services, which were indispensable in a country of which the population was entirely hostile. As for the reinforcement of four thousand men drawn from the army of the centre Marshal Marmont regarded it, with reason, as a chimera, in the situation in which Madrid was at that time. He could not reckon upon more than the twelve thousand men of General Caffarelli, who had replaced General Dorsenne, and who had found in

the state of the provinces of the north sufficiently plausible reasons to delay, and even to refuse, his contingent. He could not, therefore, quietly await the dangers which might pour around him ; and in the meantime there was another part of his task at which he was no less terrified, and which was the defence of Badajoz. A secret presentiment, which does much credit to his foresight, warned him that Lord Wellington would probably, after the surprise of Ciudad-Rodrigo, proceed to surprise Badajoz, and he asked himself how he could quit Castille and leave it unguarded, for the purpose of flying to the defence of Badajoz, which was at least fifteen marches distant from Salamanca. In the midst of these perplexities he sent a confidential aide-de-camp to Paris to inform Napoleon of all these dangers, and to say that the only manner of preparing against them was, in his opinion, to unite under one command the armies of the north, of the centre, and of Portugal. Were he sure of always being obeyed, he said, he believed that, by a good distribution of his forces, and by always having fifty or sixty thousand troops at command, he might be in a state to resist the English ; and although, he added, this would be a very considerable command to entrust to a person who, as was his own case, had neither performed such services nor gained such a reputation as could justify a pretence to it, nevertheless, what he proposed was far preferable to the divided state of command actually existing. In default of this concentration of command Marshal Marmont demanded permission to serve elsewhere.

It was a great disadvantage to Napoleon, that distrustful by character, and by long acquaintance with men, he permitted himself to fancy he perceived interested views even in the most judicious counsel. Napoleon loved Marshal Marmont who had been one of his aides-de-camp, and whose amiable and brilliant qualities he thoroughly appreciated ; but, in consequence of long familiarity, and the habit of trusting him in an off-hand manner, he failed to attach sufficient importance to his advice, declaring that his head was turned with ambition, declaring that he was not capable of such a command, that to satisfy him Joseph would have to be deprived of the army of the centre, which was impossible, and that the Marshal besides was interfering in matters which did not concern him, since Badajoz had not been entrusted to his care ; that he had but to guard well the north of the Peninsula against the English ; that it was for the army of Andalusia to defend Badajoz, and that it would be perfectly sufficient to defend it provided the English should attack this place with two divisions, namely, with Hill's division rein-



forced, but that if they attacked it with five, which would be in fact with almost their whole army, led by Lord Wellington, that the army of Portugal should then throw itself upon Coimbra or even march upon Thomar, and that in that case Lord Wellington would be obliged to retrace his steps and to abandon the siege of Badajoz; that it was absolutely necessary to pursue this manner of manœuvring, and that if it became a matter of urgent need to succour the army of Andalusia, it should be by advancing by the Beira and the left of the Tagus as far as Coimbra or Thomar, being always careful to cover our line of communications with the Pyrenees.

These views were just, as were all those of Napoleon with regard to matters of war, but although generally so, it was by no means impossible that in particular cases they might lose their justness, and even become a source of ruin. If Badajoz, for example, instead of being placed in a state of defence, which would enable it to hold out for twelve months, should scarcely be in a position to maintain a siege during one, the diversion directed to be made on the Tagus, although very specious, would be no decisive reason to induce Lord Wellington to raise a siege which was on the point of being crowned with success. Moreover, it would be necessary that the march upon the Tagus should be attempted with sufficient forces, and for this purpose it would also be necessary that the armies of the north and of Portugal, at least, should be placed under a single head. But this, unfortunately, was what Napoleon was unwilling to admit.

The secret presentiment of Marshal Marmont with respect to the projects of Lord Wellington was but too well founded; for the latter, encouraged by the rapid conquest of Ciudad-Rodrigo, and feeling each day more persuaded that the French armies by their isolated movements would leave him time to execute short and unexpected sieges, had made every preparation on the day succeeding that on which Ciudad-Rodrigo was captured, to make a furious attempt on Badajoz, with immense supplies of whatever was necessary to a great siege, and with a prodigal expenditure of human blood. He had already, with this purpose, transported a vast matériel from Abrantès to Elvas, and marched successively all his divisions upon the Alentejo, taking care to remain in person upon the Coa, in order that his design might not be suspected; and in this object he perfectly succeeded.

The garrison of Badajoz had not ceased to besiege Marshal Soult with cries of alarm, and to demand aid at his hands. But Marshal Soult thinking that what had occurred once would occur again, and failing to take into account the al-



tered state of affairs, believed that Badajoz, which had already resisted a siege of two months, would certainly be able to resist the enemy now during one, especially since its defences had been perfected, and as time would thus be allowed both for himself and Marshal Marmont to advance to its aid, there was no occasion to be anxious respecting this threat of a new siege.

He should have considered that it is most unwise to rely on succour expected from a distance; that although the English had conducted the first siege very badly they might conduct the second much better and with greater means at their disposal, and that it was necessary therefore to place this fortress in a perfect state of defence. A garrison of five thousand men, which number was reduced to four thousand at the moment of investment by the enemy, was completely insufficient. Ten thousand men, with provisions and munitions in proportion, were necessary to resist the attack of the English army; and it would have been much better to have raised the garrison of Badajoz to this strength than to have left in Estremadura the corps of General Drouet, which could do nothing else than fall back before the first appearance of the English; for had the garrison consisted of ten thousand men and some cavalry it would have been able to overrun a great extent of surrounding country, and have served as a corps of observation for Estremadura better than the corps of General Drouet, would have been almost invincible in the case of a siege, and been able to provide itself both with forage and provisions. At the end of February, a month after the capture of Ciudad-Rodrigo, when it had become evident that the enemy projected a new siege, the fortress had no more than two months provisions, with a supply of powder by no means sufficient for the purposes of a long siege, and was completely without the wood necessary for palisades and blindages. The defences of the place, indeed, had been improved on the right as on the left. On the right bank the breaches of fort Saint Christoval had been repaired, the scarps raised, and the fosses deepened in the live rock. On the left bank the castle had been placed in a state of defence, the foot of the lunette of Picurina which covered it had been perfected, the flood of the Rivillas considerably increased by means of a strong retention of the waters, and finally, the fort of Pardaleras entirely closed at the gorge. The fronts on the south west had always been the most exposed part, but mines had been formed under these fronts in order to keep off the enemy. Wood, unfortunately, had been wanting for palisading the fosses, and the construction of blinds; but the heroism of the garrison enabled it to dispense with these, and to maintain their ground when exposed to the bombs and howitzers.

Such was the state of affairs when the English appeared under its walls on the 16th of March 1812, numbering at least fifty thousand men, and provided with an immense matériel. As they were no more skilful in the art of sieges now than they had been at the capture of Ciudad-Rodrigo they resolved to push forward the approaches just sufficient to render possible the establishment of the breaching batteries, and to enable them to take advantage of this numerical superiority to make two or three simultaneous assaults, which would be a costly, but most probably, effectual means of overwhelming the garrison, which despite its bravery would not be sufficiently numerous to resist them.

The investment of the fortress having been immediately completed the English, without loss of time, made choice of the point of attack. Disgusted by their misadventures in their previous attempts against the fort Saint Christoval, they directed their efforts on the left bank of the Guadiana, and consequently against the fortress itself. The attack on the side of the south west, although presenting greater facilities was still neglected, and this time from fear of the mines constructed in this quarter. The English advanced to the east towards the castle, and towards the fronts contiguous to the Trinidad gate, in spite of the flood of the Ravillas and the lunette de Picurina. On the 17th, on the day succeeding the investment of the fortress, they opened the trenches in front of the Picurina lunette, an unfinished work, of but slight relief, closed at the gorge by a simple palisade, and easily capable of being taken by assault, and the capture of which would render easy the erection of a battery with which to breach the fronts against which was to be directed the new attack. On the 19th the besieged desired to employ a means of defence which is both usual and efficacious in cases in which the garrison is brave and resolute, namely, a sortie, by which the works of the besiegers might be destroyed, the progress of the trenches delayed, and, consequently, the progress of the siege also. A sortie was, accordingly, executed by our troops, with great vigour, driving the English from their trenches and enabling us to destroy a portion of the trenches themselves; but our troops, in place of retreating without false pride when their end had been attained, persisted in disputing the ground with the enemy, and had twenty killed and a hundred and sixty wounded. The English loss amounted to three hundred men, but this number was of little importance to an army of fifty thousand, whilst the loss on our side was of great injury to the besieged who only amounted to four thousand. The garrison renounced, therefore, this means of prolonging the defence, which is efficacious only when a garrison is numerous.

The works having been pushed on with extreme activity, on the 25th of March the English were able to effect a breach in the Picurina lunette, to demolish its saillant, and break down the sides; and in the evening they attacked it with three strong columns supported by reserves. The lunette was only defended by two hundred soldiers selected from all the regiments; and no more troops, in the existing state of the garrison, could have been devoted to this purpose. The three columns having thrown themselves into the fosse (for the English persisted in their system of not pushing the approaches as far as the brinks of the fosse itself), one of them rushed behind the work, and attempted to tear away the palisades, so as to be able to enter the gorge, but recoiled before a very vigorous fire; and the second having at the same time attempted to enter the breach had been in like manner driven back; but the third planting ladders against the least protected portion of the wall reached the parapet at the very moment when the second column, returning from the check, escalated the half demolished saillant. The little garrison having to resist two simultaneous attacks was insufficient for its task, and was compelled to lay down its arms; having lost eighty-three men in killed or wounded, whilst eighty-six were made prisoners. The loss on the side of the English was about three hundred.

Our artillery immediately opened a furious fire on the victors in possession of the Picurina lunette, and rendered the occupation of it very dangerous; and it was only by the sacrifice of many of the soldiers that they were able to effect a lodgment in the conquered work, and establish breaching batteries against the two opposite bastions. From this time they abandoned almost all their other batteries, the position of which had been very ill selected, and devoted themselves exclusively to the new ones.

In the meantime the French artillery, admirably served, made them pay dear for this rash manner of proceeding, but as powder soon began to fail, the garrison supplied the place of the fire of artillery with the fire of musketry, and the best marksmen of each regiment directed their fire against the English artillerymen. If the garrison had had sufficient powder and had been sufficiently numerous, a furious cannonade might have been accompanied by a vigorous sortie against the enemy's position in the gorge of the Picurina lunette, and would probably have deprived the besiegers of all the advantages they had obtained, and driven them back to the position they occupied at the commencement of the siege. The execution of such a sortie, however, would have required eleven or twelve hundred men, and the probable

sacrifice of three or four hundred ; and it was far better that the garrison should reserve both itself and the powder it still possessed for the decisive day of assault.

This moment was not long to be delayed ; so rapid was the progress made by the besiegers and so incapable were the besieged of resisting it. The garrison, however, had already gained fifteen days, by the sacrifice, it is true, of seven hundred men out of four thousand, whilst the enemy had still failed to effect breaches in the two bastions by which they had determined to enter. On the 31st they had established various batteries containing twenty cannon of heavy calibre against the two bastions they were attempting to demolish. They prolonged their trenches to the right and left with the object of raising many other batteries which should reply to the artillery of the fortress, enfilade its defences, and increase the number of the breaches to three. Within a very short space of time there were fifty-two pieces of great calibre in position, from which was opened a terrific cannonade to which the garrison, which had reserved its munition until the last moment, replied by a fire which was no less vigorous, and which succeeded in dismounting many of the enemy's pieces, but the English possessing a superabundance of matériel and displaying great courage, replaced their dismounted cannon under a storm of projectiles ; and our own artillerymen, who suffered themselves not to be surpassed or even equalled, in like manner maintained their ground in their ruined embrasures, and redoubled their exertions in the midst of flying shot and shell. The courage of the garrison had reached that pitch when danger is no more thought of, and they had sworn to a man to die rather than surrender, or go to die on the pontons in which the English, to the disgrace of civilization, caused their prisoners to perish. The most unfortunate persons in the midst of this terrible struggle were the inhabitants, a considerable number of whom, of the poorer classes, remained in the town. The garrison had had the humanity to afford them a sparing subsistence from its own stores ; but not having the means of constructing casemates or blindages for itself, it could not protect these poor persons from the storm of shells in which it boldly lived itself. Terrible lamentations, therefore, filled this desolated town, and wrung the hearts of our soldiers who, insensible to their own perils, were full of compassion for the unfortunate creatures whom during fifteen months they had been accustomed to regard as their compatriots.

At length the decisive moment drew near. Three large breaches were effected in the attacked bastions, and the besiegers having contrived to diminish the volume of the



flood by destroying a portion of the banks by which it was retained, rendered these breaches accessible, without, however, taking the precaution, the neglect of which was to cost them dear, of throwing down the counterscarp, in conformity with the ordinary rules of military engineering.

Lord Wellington did the garrison the honour of not summoning it to surrender, for he knew that every proposal with respect to capitulation would be useless. The governor, in fact, having assembled the chief officers in council, it had been decided unanimously and amidst the acclamations of the troops, that they should await the assault, and rather perish sword in hand than surrender; and the garrison immediately employed all the means which the greatest skill could suggest for the defence of the breaches against a resolute enemy. The able and intrepid chief of the engineers planned and traced out the necessary works, and the soldiers executed them with enthusiasm. Whilst half of them guarded the ramparts the other half, working in the fosse, cleared the foot of the breaches, which was a perilous undertaking, but possible, since the enemy had not taken possession of the brink of the fosse. Many fell before the enemy's howitzers and grenades, but others continued to remove the heaps caused by the ruins. Unhappily the English artillery, still pursuing its work of demolition, speedily re-established these mounds. The most effectual work executed by the garrison was on the rampart itself, where a second entrenchment was constructed behind the breaches, chevaux de frise planted in front, barrels filled with explosive matter placed on the sides, and the streets barricaded which led to the point of attack. A last and formidable means of defence was prepared. The enemy persisting in not pushing the approaches up to the brink of the fosse, and not having thrown down the counterscarp (which is the wall of the fosse opposite the fortress), our troops were able to work at its foot. The commander of engineers, Lamare, placed there a long chain of bombs and barrels charged with explosive and destructive matter, connected by a chain of powder, to which it was planned that the brave officer of the engineers, Mailhet, lying in ambush in the fosse, should set fire at the moment of the assault.

These arrangements having thus been made, select troops were posted at the summit of the breaches with three muskets a man, cannon loaded with grape were placed at the sides, whilst a reserve, which was as strong as circumstances permitted, awaited the orders of the governor at the principal spot in the town. Lord Wellington had made every preparation for attempting the assault on the evening of the 6th of

April, the twenty-first day since his arrival before Badajoz ; and had resolved to make it with such an enormous force that success would be almost certain.

On the 6th of April, therefore, about nine o'clock in the evening, the artillery of the besiegers vomited forth upon the fortress floods of destructive fire. Two divisions, under General Coleville, rushed directly towards the breaches, whilst Picton's division, furnished with ladders, proceeded to the right to attempt to escalade the castle at a point at which its weakness had been observed, and Leith's division turned to the left for the purpose of attempting another escalade at the extremity of the south west, which the English had hitherto neglected. The two divisions commanded by General Coleville arrived at the brink of the fosse, leaped in, and immediately rushed upon the breaches. A great shout from our soldiers announced their appearance, and they were permitted to advance until they had begun to climb the ruins, when the fire of musketry received them in front, whilst the grape shot took them in flank, and they were hurled down headlong from the breach ; and whilst the rear of the columns attempted to support the first ranks, Mailhet, descending into the fosse in the midst of this frightful tumult, match in hand, at precisely the right moment, fired the long chain of bombs and barrels arranged along the foot of the counter-scarp. Instantly there commenced on the rear of the assaulting columns, and in the path of those who supported them, a series of terrible explosions, which moment after moment hurled forth storms of destructive missiles and fatal fire. Moment after moment this murderous fire burst through the gloom, to be succeeded by the night, and again to burst forth, illumining death in a thousand different forms. Unhappily, the intrepid Mailhet was himself struck by the explosion of a shell. At length the two English divisions which had been thrown on the three breaches, notwithstanding their bravery, yielded to the fury of the resistance, losing their forward impulse under the incessant hail of musketry and grape shot hurled against them. Already almost three thousand English had fallen, and Lord Wellington was about to order a retreat when circumstances in another direction changed the whole course of affairs. On the right of the attack General Picton had, with rare intrepidity, planted ladders against the sides of the castle, and the Hessians, who were charged with the defence in this quarter, either from surprise or treachery, permitted the precious entrenchment which had been confided to their courage and their loyalty, to be invaded by the enemy, and an English officer rushing to the gates which led to the town hastened to close them,

and thus render the position of the English in the castle secure before the French should have time to arrive. The governor, Phillippon, who had been frequently deceived by false cries of alarm, and who kept his reserve for some moment of extreme danger, refused at first to believe the news of this entrance of the enemy into the castle ; but convinced, too late, of the reality of the fact, he decided to dispatch thither four hundred men ; and these, received at the first gate with a murderous fire, proceeded to the second to find their efforts there equally vain. In the excessive desire on our side to obtain admittance into the castle and expel the English, it was determined to detach from the south west walls, which had hitherto been neglected by the enemy, and now appeared but little threatened, a portion of the forces which defended them, for the purpose of assisting in the recapture of the castle. This was done, and Leith's division, which had planned an escalade on this side, finding the rampart abandoned were able by the aid of a multitude of ladders to reach the top of the wall, which was here but of little height ; and the entrance had no sooner been effected than the troops of this division ran along the rampart to take à revers the French troops which had hitherto victoriously defended the breaches. Seeing this, the guard which defended the nearest front rushed upon the English with the bayonet and stopped them. But the latter returning immediately to the charge with overwhelming numbers regained the advantage, and spread themselves over the town. From this moment indescribable confusion arose in the ranks of the heroic garrison which defended the other portions of Badajoz ; and the defenders of the breaches taken à revers, were compelled either to surrender or to fly. The governor, the chief of the engineers, and the staff, after having made every possible exertion, attempted, by running to the bridge of the Guadiana, to withdraw with some remnants of the garrison into the fort Saint Christoval, for the purpose of there defending themselves, but they were either killed or taken in their attempt.

On the following day they were conducted to the presence of Lord Wellington, who received them with all courtesy, but refused to listen to their entreaties in favour of the unhappy town of Badajoz. It certainly was not our duty to intercede for these Spaniards, or that of the English to punish them for our resistance ; but Lord Wellington, after having politely received our officers, gave up, without pity, the town of Badajoz to pillage, as the just right of troops which had gone so valiantly to the assault.

The siege of Badajoz cost us about fifteen hundred in



killed or wounded, and three thousand prisoners, but it cost Lord Wellington more than six thousand men placed hors de combat, which was a greater number than he had lost in any of his battles. Nevertheless, his end was not the less attained. Ciudad-Rodrigo and Badajoz had been snatched from us, Portugal was closed against us, and thenceforth Spain lay open to the English.

Marshal Soult, on learning the peril of Badajoz, which had been frequently intimated to him, had tardily quitted the lines of Cadiz, and had at length set out to the succour of the besieged place, at the head of twenty-four thousand men, which were all the active troops of which he could avail himself, whilst continuing to guard Grenada and Seville, and he hastened to Llerena in the hope of finding there, as in the preceding summer, Marshal Marmont with thirty thousand men. A vain hope; for Marshal Marmont was not there; and the news of the capture of Badajoz threw Marshal Soult into the greatest consternation, for the sole trophy of his Andalusian campaign had thus escaped him, and should Lord Wellington choose to carry forward his operations by Estremadura and Andalusia, all the routes were open before him.

In the meantime Marshal Marmont had not remained idle. Bound to remain in old Castille by Napoleon's formal orders, he had recourse, on learning the extreme danger of Badajoz, to the manœuvre which had been prescribed to him. He had passed the Agueda with five divisions, dispersed the guerilla bands which infested the country, driven back the detachments of English troops which guarded the frontier of Portugal and then had paused from the fear of a failure of provisions, and the conviction also that what he did was perfectly useless. His manœuvre, however, was not altogether without effect, for the news of it induced Lord Wellington, who might have been tempted to attack Marshal Soult whose troops he knew to be only twenty-four thousand men, to suspend his march and resume the route of the north of Portugal.

Napoleon, on hearing of the capture by the enemy of these two places which had cost the French so much blood and so much exertion to obtain, and which had been the chief obstacles in the path of the English either to the north or to the south, was as much grieved as irritated, and attributed this misfortune to every one by turns; to Marshal Soult who, he said, at the head of eighty thousand men had done nothing at all; to Marshal Marmont, who had not known how, he complained, to modify orders issued to him at the distance of three hundred leagues. These reproaches were, however,



scarcely just. Marshal Soult had scarcely at that moment more than fifty thousand men at his disposal, and could not have made any serious opposition to the proceedings of the English but by the sacrifice of Grenada. His real mistake had been the leaving the corps of General Drouet in Estremadura, where it was perfectly useless, and of not having supplied Badajoz with ten thousand men, cavalry, and sufficient powder and provisions. Badajoz would thus have been able to hold out during many months, and time would have been afforded for its relief. As for Marshal Marmont, the order he received directing him to remain in old Castille, not to descend into Estremadura, and not to advance to the succour of Badajoz except by a diversion in the province of Beira, was so precise, that no General, however bold, could have ventured to disregard it.

The position which this Marshal had originally taken, that of Almaraz on the Tagus, was the only suitable one, the only one which would have enabled him to advance by turns to the relief of Ciudad-Rodrigo or Badajoz. If, in fact, he had received reinforcements of twenty thousand men whom he might have posted at Salamanca, he would have been able to march upon Badajoz with the thirty thousand he had upon the Tagus, and in union with the army of Andalusia would have been able to meet Lord Wellington with fifty-five thousand men, and have raised the siege of Badajoz. If, on the other hand, the point of danger had been in the north, he might have repassed the Guadarrama, and finding there the twenty thousand men posted at Salamanca, would even in this case have at his command fifty thousand men with whom he might have checked all Lord Wellington's efforts. By refusing him a reinforcement of twenty thousand men and fixing him in old Castille, Napoleon had rendered the fall of Badajoz almost inevitable. Certainly the idea of a diversion directed from Salamanca upon Beira was a just one, as any idea of Napoleon's with respect to war naturally would be, and it was proved so by its result, since it drew Lord Wellington to the north of Portugal the day after the capture of Badajoz. But unhappily it had drawn him away the day after instead of the day before its capture. The plan in itself was a very good one, but a general kind of fitness is not sufficient in practice, for without the most rigorous precision in the calculation of distances, time, and forces, the best plans must fail or even become sources of misfortune. Doubtless if Badajoz had contained a garrison of ten thousand men, and powder and provisions in sufficient quantity; and if the Duke de Ragusa had had fifty thousand men, and more magazines always well provisioned, and had marched

under these conditions upon Coimbra, Lord Wellington would infallibly a second time have relaxed his hold and abandoned the siege of Badajoz. But Badajoz having no means of making a protracted defence, and the Duke de Ragusa being unable with the means at his disposal to do anything but make an empty menace, it was impossible by a simple demonstration upon the Beira to turn from his purpose so skilful and determined a man as Lord Wellington.

Thus in 1811 as in 1810 all our combinations in Spain had miscarried, and all the reinforcements sent thither been unavailing. Before entering upon the detail of the still sadder events which were about to happen to us in the Peninsula, let us retrace the course which affairs had taken there during the last two years. We have already seen in the fortieth book of this history how unfortunate had been the issue of 1810; how at this period Napoleon, who had wisely determined to employ all the available forces in Spain in the decision of the European question which he had carried thither, and to direct his chief efforts against the English, had permitted himself to be diverted from his plan by the persuasions of Joseph and Marshal Soult, and had consented to the fatal Andalusian expedition, which had caused the dispersion of forty-four thousand of the most veteran troops then in the Peninsula; we have seen how Masséna, sent to Lisbon with seventy thousand men, soon reduced to fifty thousand by local circumstances, had found in front of Torres Vedras an insurmountable obstacle, which nevertheless he might have been able to overcome had he been reinforced with twenty-five thousand men from Andalusia, and an equal number from Castille; how Marshal Soult had neither been able nor willing to aid him; how General Drouet had been equally unable; how Napoleon, engaging with disastrous facility in new designs, had refused him the fifty thousand men which would have been sufficient; and how, finally, this campaign, which should have struck the English a mortal blow, had only resulted in misfortunes to ourselves, and uselessly consumed the hundred and fifty thousand men who had been sent to the Peninsula after the peace of Vienna. These sad particulars are doubtless present to the memories of the readers of this history; and we have had to show in the present book that the results of the campaign of 1811 were no less unfortunate.

Since the middle of 1811 Napoleon had resolved to carry his arms, under his own command, to the north, that is to say, Russia; he should have confined himself in the meantime to an imposing defensive position in Spain; and had Marshal Suchet been left in Aragon or Catalonia, without rein-

forcements, but at the same time without the necessity of entering upon new tasks, this Marshal, especially after the capture of Tarragone, would have remained in peaceable and undisturbed possession of these provinces; had Marshal Soult been left at Seville, and Marshal Marmont on the Tagus, unburdened by the necessity of sending troops to Valencia, but ordered to hasten at the first signs of danger to the relief of Badajoz, as they already had, with so much success; and had Marshal Marmont been permitted to unite with his own troops the army of the north, receiving also the largest portion of the reserve, it is probable that the efforts of the English against Badajoz and Ciudad-Rodrigo might long have been baffled, and Lord Wellington reduced during a whole year to a state of inaction which would very much have injured him in the public opinion of his country. But unwilling to renounce anything, engaged in preparations for his gigantic expedition against Russia, desiring to carry forward matters energetically in Spain, flattering himself that they would be much advanced during the autumn and winter of 1811, Napoleon renewed, by his orders directing the expedition of Valencia, the fault which he had committed in permitting the expedition of Andalusia; condemned Marshal Soult to extend his operations without having received reinforcements, and whilst he concentrated all his available forces towards him for a moment, left Lord Wellington at liberty to seize Ciudad-Rodrigo, close the Beira against us, and open Castille to himself.

Marshal Marmont had hastened to the relief of Ciudad-Rodrigo, but having to collect his widely-scattered forces had arrived too late, and this sole trophy of the campaign of Portugal was snatched from us. Badajoz still remained to us, also the sole trophy of the campaign of Andalusia; and we were to lose it by the same cause. Napoleon compelled, sooner than he had at first supposed, to recall from Spain his guard, the Poles, the dragoons, and the fourth battalions, and marching all to the north of the Peninsula with the object of subsequently marching them to the north of Europe, had drawn Marshal Marmont from the Tagus to the Douro, and posted him there, thus exposing Badajoz, which Lord Wellington, always on the alert, had seized as he had seized Ciudad-Rodrigo, taking advantage of the void left in front of this fortress by our erroneous movements. For the purpose therefore, of capturing Valencia, we had lost Badajoz and Ciudad-Rodrigo, the sole fruits of two difficult campaigns, the sole serious obstacle in the way of an offensive march on the part of the English. Such was, and could not but be, the result of this method of giving orders from a distance,

of giving orders whilst the mind was engaged on other matters, and of devoting to each object only half the resources and the attention it demanded.

The commission of these faults left our affairs in Spain in the following state. General Suchet remained at Valencia with a force just sufficient to keep the country in subjection, but far too small to render practicable any operations at the least distance; Marshal Soult was in the midst of Andalusia, with a force insufficient for the capture of Cadiz, and insufficient to engage the English, should they, after the capture of Badajoz, march against him, which was, however, very improbable; finally, Marshal Marmont in the north, where the English desired to strike the decisive blow, either on Madrid, or on the line of communication of the French armies, deprived of Ciudad-Rodrigo, would have been able, provided Joseph and General Caffarelli had reinforced him *à propos*, to have assembled forty thousand men with which to engage Lord Wellington at the head of sixty thousand. This then was the state of affairs in Spain after there had been sent thither reinforcements to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand men in 1810, and forty thousand good troops and twenty thousand conscripts in 1811, in addition to more than four hundred thousand troops which had entered the Peninsula from 1808 to 1810! Of these six hundred thousand men there did not now survive the half; and of these only one hundred and seventy thousand were in a state fit for active service; and finally, we must add that of these one hundred and seventy thousand only forty thousand could, by being well manœuvred, be rendered capable of covering Madrid and Valladolid, or in other words the capital and our line of communications!

Napoleon, at the moment of his departure from Paris, having learned by experience the difficulty of commanding from a distance, adopted the plan of bestowing upon Joseph the command of all the armies serving in Spain, without prescribing to him, however, the sole plan of action which might yet have saved everything, and which was that of leaving Marshal Suchet at Valencia, since he was there, at the same time throwing back the army of Andalusia upon the Tagus, uniting it there under a sole command with the army of Portugal, and establishing these two armies, which together would have formed a compact force of eighty thousand men, in a well chosen position from which they could, at the first signs of danger, have advanced upon Madrid or Valladolid, following the line of march adopted by the English. But Napoleon contented himself with ordering all his Generals to obey Joseph's commands, without considering how



Marshal Suchet, who was in the habit of governing alone, how Marshal Soult, who was resolved to reign exclusively in Andalusia, and how Marshal Marmont, who had not ceased to be at variance with the Court of Madrid, on account of the interests of the army of Portugal, might be able or would be willing to submit to the exercise of this authority by Joseph, who had been so long slighted and sneered at by Napoleon himself. Marshal Jourdan, who was appointed chief of Joseph's staff, composed with respect to the state of affairs a memoir which was full of good sense and sound argument, pointing out all the inconveniences we have just alluded to, and it was sent to Paris. Before we narrate how it was answered by Napoleon, and, which is a far more serious matter, by events themselves, we must again turn our attention to the affairs of the north, to that other abyss into which Napoleon, constrained by his evil genius, was about to plunge his own destinies, and, unfortunately, those of France at the same time.

## BOOK XLIII.

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### PASSAGE OF THE NIEMEN.

PROGRESS of events in the north—A success of the Russians, removing all appearance of feebleness on their part, disposes the Emperor Alexander to send M. de Nesselrode to Paris in order to make an amicable arrangement of the differences with France—At this news, Napoleon, averse to the pacific objects of this mission, treats Prince Kourakin with extreme coldness, and displays a disposition with respect to the mission of M. de Nesselrode which compels Russia to renounce it—Final and extensive preparations for war—Vastness and distribution of the forces assembled by Napoleon—Movement of all his armies on a line which stretches from the Alps to the mouths of the Rhine and advances to the Vistula—His precautions to arrive insensibly as far as the Niemen without provoking the Russians to invade Poland and old Prussia—Orders given to M. de Lauriston to hold pacific language, and M. de Czernicheff sent to persuade the Emperor Alexander that the sole object is a negotiation supported by an armed demonstration—Political alliances of Napoleon—Treaty of co-operation with Prussia and Austria—Negotiations towards an alliance with Sweden and with the Porte—Efforts to excite a war between America and England, and the probability of their success—Last arrangements of Napoleon before quitting Paris—Interior situation of the Empire—Scarcity, finances, state of public opinion—Situation at Saint Petersburg—Alexander's reception of the mission of M. de Czernicheff—Influenced by the movements of the French army, and the treaties of alliance concluded with Prussia and Austria, the Emperor Alexander determines to depart for his head quarters, still declaring his readiness to negotiate—Having received information of this movement, Napoleon orders a new movement of his troops, sends M. de Narbonne to Wilna to diminish the effect which might be produced by this movement, and quits Paris on the 9th of May, 1812, accompanied by the Empress and all her court—Arrival of Napoleon at Dresden—Assembly in this capital of almost all the sovereigns of the continent—Prodigious spectacle of power—Napoleon, informed that Prince Kourakin had demanded his passports, charges Prince Kourakin with a new mission to Alexander in order to prevent premature hostilities—Vain hopes in respect to Sweden and Turkey—Views relative to Poland—Chances of its reconstitution—Mission of M. de Pradt as Ambassador of France to Warsaw—

Return of M. de Narbonne to Dresden, after having fulfilled his mission to Wilna—Result of this mission—The month of May having passed by Napoleon quits Dresden for his head quarters—Horrible sufferings of the people oppressed by our troops—Napoleon at Thorn—Immense equipage of the army and excessive development of the staffs—Napoleon's interview with Marshal Davoust and King Murat—His sojourn at Dantzie—Vast system of interior navigation for the purpose of transporting our convoys to the midst of Lithuania—Arrival at Königsberg—Final rupture with Bernadotte—The declaration of war with Russia founded on a false pretext—Plan of campaign—Arrival at the bank of the Niemen—Passage of this river on the 24th of June—Contrast between Napoleon's projects in 1810 and his enterprises in 1812—Sad presentiments.

## BOOK XLIII.

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NAPOLÉON and Alexander had remained since the month of November last in a posture of defence, presenting to each other a menacing aspect, the latter not desirous of war, indeed terrified at its risks, yet resolved to hazard them rather than sacrifice the dignity, or the commercial prosperity of his people, and, meantime, neglecting nothing which might terminate the Turkish quarrel, whether by arms or diplomacy; the former, on the contrary, without eagerness for the conflict, nay, decided in his measures much more by ambition than taste for danger, and making his preparations with an emulous energy proceeding from an immovable conviction of its necessity sooner or later, should he require from Russia the same absolute submission which Prussia and Austria paid him. While affairs stood thus, now that all that could be said had been said on the occupation of Oldenburg, the admission of neutrals into Russian ports, the origin of the mutually defiant armaments of France and Russia, and that all fresh negotiations concerning topics so monotonous were become impossible, there was nothing left but silence and action. Now it was one corps which had to be organized, now another; this to be moved towards the Dwina or the Dnieper, that towards the Oder or the Vistula. But things could not go on thus without the certainty that the two opponents must soon find themselves face to face, hand to hand, and ready for mutual slaughter. All men of sense and right-mindedness in Russia, France, and Europe generally, some on the common grounds of reason and humanity, others on the more special yet generous motives of patriotism, felt with pain that the issue of a persistence for some days longer in this silence and activity must be a deluge of blood from the Rhine to the Volga. The most active champion of these noble sentiments, M. de Lauriston, forced himself to write to Paris to the purport that there was no wish for hostilities at



Saint Petersburg, that on the contrary, it was opposed to their sympathies, but that if begun, it would be waged with fearful resolvedness; still should France consent to humour slightly the Russian sensitiveness, make some concessions in favour of the Prince of Oldenburg, and be contented with measures a little more rigorous against the English flag, it at least might assure the preservation of peace for itself, however matters might turn out in the rest of Europe. By means of insisting he had drawn from Napoleon some expressions, such as, "Lauriston permits himself to be overreached," outbreaks to which M. de Bassano added dispatches full of arrogance and blindness.

Distressed at not being listened to at Paris, M. de Lauriston insisted upon being so at Saint Petersburg, taking pains to point out the difficulty and danger of a fresh struggle with Napoleon; and demanded, with the dignity of honest conviction, that instructions should instantly be sent to Prince Kourakin to obtain an explanation on all the disputed points, for, he declared incessantly, none of the points on which the two powers appeared to be at variance were worth a war. The cabinets of Vienna and Berlin adopted the same course, the one in good faith, the other from motives of prudence. Prussia saw in an European conflagration, in which she would be forced to take part, new dangers for herself, and her prudent King, Frederick William, was not one of those who, when in a state of misfortune, think it necessary to take active proceedings at the risk of bringing on themselves still greater misfortunes. Moreover, the obligation which Prussia would be under of declaring herself in favour of Napoleon should war be declared, was very repugnant to Germanic sentiment which, although repressed, nevertheless existed in perfect sincerity. Frederick William, therefore, was ardently desirous of peace, and transmitted to Saint Petersburg urgent entreaties, and had even proposed the intervention of his good offices, with a view to the maintenance of peace between France and Russia; all these exertions, however, had been received with disdain by the latter, which was indignant that Prussia was not her ally. Austria, although she hoped that a fresh struggle between France and Russia would furnish her with opportunities of reinstating her fortunes at the expense of the one or the other of them, was nevertheless no less terrified at the idea of a war between these powers, especially as she perceived the necessity of being the ally of France, and was urgent, therefore, in her advocacy of peace at Saint Petersburg, and offered her intervention, which was rejected as disdainfully as had been the same offer by Prussia. At length, Russia,

who was importuned with entreaties which seemed to imply that the maintenance of peace depended on her, replied to the ministers of the two powers—"Advise others to maintain peace, since you seem so desirous of it. Advise those to maintain it who now wish for war, and compel me in my own despite to prepare for it."

As it was so repeatedly urged that some attempt at explanation ought to be made before the sword was finally drawn, and that Prince Kourakin was not calculated to appease the quarrel, the government at Saint Petersburg had at length turned its eyes towards a man who was well fitted to re-establish a good understanding between the disputing powers, if it were possible. This was M. de Nesselrode, principal secretary to the legation at Paris, very young, but very distinguished, talented, far-sighted, and judicious, possessing the confidence of the Emperor Alexander, and treated with much more serious consideration by the Emperor Napoleon than Prince Kourakin himself. He had been heard to say, since his return to Paris, that if it were really desired all could be arranged; that Napoleon was not so passionately fond of war as had been supposed; and that by treating him in an open straightforward manner an honourable arrangement could easily be obtained. The government at Saint Petersburg was very much inclined, therefore, to send him to Paris with instructions and powers to arrange all the questions recently raised, and which had been envenomed rather by what had not been, than by what had been said. M. de Nesselrode showed that he felt exceedingly flattered at being entrusted by such a mission at his early age, and made every preparation for securing its success. Unfortunately, however, that which so much flattered him inspired M. de Romanzoff with the utmost jealousy, and although the latter was extremely interested in preventing the war, he took umbrage at the progress made by the young diplomatist and the confidence which Alexander appeared to repose in him. He made, therefore, certain objections to this mission, although he was ready to make many sacrifices for the purpose of maintaining peace and an alliance with France. One of these objections, and it was especially calculated to touch Russian susceptibility was, that to send an envoy to Paris with a special mission to negotiate a peace, would have the appearance of imploring it, especially when the senders were not the authors of the measures which had provoked the war.

However, an event which had lately happened in Turkey to the advantage of the Russians, afforded them an opportunity which they resolved to seize, of sending M. de Nesselrode to Paris without showing any appearance of timidity. General

Kutusof, who was at this time charged with the direction of the war, had taken advantage of the negligence of the Turks, who, after the capture of Rutschuk had remained inactive, for by drawing them to Nicopolis by feigning an intention to pass the Danube, since he had crossed it near Rutschuk, he had surprised the vizier's camp, dispersed a portion of his troops, and held the remainder strictly blockaded in an isle of the stream. This success, which appeared calculated to compel the Porte to treat for peace, had caused great rejoicings in Saint Petersburg, whither the news had arrived in November, 1811. General Kutusof had been immediately authorised to open a negotiation for peace, ceasing to propose some of the conditions on which Russia had formerly insisted. Thus, the surrender of the Danubian provinces, which were Bessarabia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, was no longer to be demanded, but only that of Bessarabia and Moldavia, and this last as far as the Sereth; in addition to a species of independence for Servia, a small territory on the coast of the Caucasus, at the mouth of the Phase, and a sum of twenty millions of piastres towards the payment of the expenses of the war. Negotiations were opened on these bases at Giurgevo, and an armistice of several months agreed on; and every moment it was hoped at Saint Petersburg that a courier would arrive bringing tidings of the conclusion of a peace.

These results, although less brilliant than those which Alexander had dreamed of obtaining, since he had flattered himself that besides Finland, he might be able to add to his empire at one stroke Bessarabia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, were sufficiently advantageous, and the acquisition of Finland and Bessarabia alone would throw considerable lustre on the commencement of a reign which would probably last a considerable time longer. But Alexander's chief reason for rejoicing in these results was, that they enabled him to send M. de Nesselrode to Paris without showing any signs of timidity. All his troops being set at liberty by the conclusion of the war on the Danube, he would appear as much to give peace as to receive it.

Instructions, therefore, were prepared for M. de Nesselrode; Alexander taking the trouble to draw them up himself, and authorising M. de Lauriston to announce the speedy departure of the new plenipotentiary. M. de Nesselrode was advanced a step in diplomatic rank that he might present himself before Napoleon clothed in all the signs of the Imperial confidence. A last courier was impatiently awaited from the banks of the Danube, that M. de Nesselrode might be despatched at the moment when the conclusion of the war with Turkey should be known, that the new negotiations might

be conducted on the side of Russia with the greater dignity and force.

The various courts of the continent, and more especially those of Austria and Prussia, were informed of these proceedings; and M. de Lauriston sent an account of them to Paris with the evident satisfaction of a good citizen, more delighted with having done what he considered right than what he was certain would meet with approval; for it is very evident from his language that he was very doubtful respecting the manner in which his court would regard his efforts for the maintenance of peace.

Certain news of the departure of M. de Nesselrode did not arrive in Paris until the middle of September, and then for various reasons very much disconcerted Napoleon. He had already received information of the reverses sustained by the Turks, who, he said, had behaved like brutes, and he regarded the conclusion of the war with Turkey as the commencement of the war with France; having always supposed, in fact, that the Russians only awaited this event to turn against him, and force him to choose, as in fact he had already done, between unacceptable conditions or war. The news of the mission of M. de Nesselrode no longer left him in any doubt; for he concluded from it that Russia considered the war in Turkey to be almost concluded, and hastened to take advantage of its conclusion to dictate conditions to France. There was something in this which greatly irritated him, and would have excited him to an outburst of passion, had he not conceived a vast plan which demanded the most profound dissimulation. He was anxious, in fact, whilst always protesting his desire for peace, and continually repeating that his armaments were simple measures of precaution, to arrive successively on the Oder and the Vistula, before the Russians should have crossed the Niemen, in order to preserve the immense stores of grain and forage which were in Poland and old Prussia, and which the Russians would not fail to destroy if time were allowed them to do so, since they loudly boasted of being ready to make deserts of their provinces, as the English had made one of Portugal. It was on this account that Napoleon, after having made himself secure of Dantzic, took care at this moment to render himself secure of the navigation of the Frische-Haff by negotiations with Prussia, in order to pass by water from Dantzic to Königsberg, and from Königsberg to Tilsit. It was from the Niemen only that he intended to make use of land transport, and, flattering himself that he would be able to convey provisions for his army a distance of two hundred leagues, he believed that he would be able to advance sufficiently far to



strike a blow at the very heart of Russia. The whole of this plan, however, would be baffled, should the Russians foresee it, and pouring down suddenly upon old Prussia and Poland, devastate them, burning their granaries, and driving off the cattle. It was necessary, therefore, little by little, unperceived and without a decided rupture with the enemy, to reach the Vistula, and from thence the Pregel before the enemy; it was necessary, also, and this was a moment of no less importance, to retard hostilities until the year 1812, for a necessary condition of the efficacy of the immense transport service which Napoleon had prepared, was the collection and maintenance of a great number of horses, and that it might not be necessary so to overburden them with provender for themselves, that they would be unable to convey provisions for the troops, it was necessary to defer the war until June, at which time, in the north, the earth is covered with food fit for cattle. Moreover, considering the extent of his preparations, although they had already occupied two years, Napoleon knew that two months were not to be despised and that as the weapon of the Russians would be destruction whilst his own would be the creation of resources, time would be of little aid to them whilst it was indispensable to himself.

For these reasons, therefore, it was necessary that he should glide, as it were, as far as the Vistula, gaining not only ground but also time without provoking a rupture. For the purposes of such a design as this nothing could be more favourable than an indefinite species of quarrel in which there was a constant repetition of such vague complaints as—"You arm. . . And you also. . . . But you began to arm first. . . . Nay, that is not truth, it was you. . . . We have no wish for war. . . . And we are equally averse to it." . . . . and such declarations, which were apparently very insignificant, but were in reality well calculated on by him who occupied whole months with these purposeless reproaches, gaining by means of them December, January, and February, and hoping to be able by their aid, to snatch the months still remaining up to June. As, therefore, a clear and categorical explanation must have put an end to a situation which was so favourable to Napoleon's designs, the arrival of M. de Nesselrode, by provoking this explanation, could not but be far from agreeable to him. Whatever skill he might employ, it was impossible that so keen sighted a man as M. de Nesselrode could be prevented from forcing him to a complete explanation.

He formed the resolution, therefore, of giving immediately his final military orders, and at the same time of taking the

most convenient method of preventing M. de Nesselrode from coming to Paris, whilst still carefully guarding against wounding the pride of Russia or driving her to an immediate rupture. He saw Prince Kourakin very frequently; he knew, for the rumour of it had already spread over all Europe, that the mission of M. de Nesselrode would speedily take place, and he never alluded to it in conversation with the Prince, which was a sufficiently plain manner of showing his disapproval of it. Nor did he stop here; for, conversing on the subject with the Prussian ambassador, who as a matter of course listened to his words and reported them to Berlin, whence the desire of aiding in the cause of peace would cause their speedy transmission to the court of Saint Petersburg, without displaying any decided intention of not receiving M. de Nesselrode, he manifested considerable dissatisfaction on the subject, appearing to disapprove of the *éclat* given to this species of extraordinary mission, which was, he declared, a means of exciting the amour-propre of the disputing powers, and to render them less inclined to make mutual concessions. To this indirect disapprobation of the mission of M. de Nesselrode he added, on an important occasion, a marked coldness towards the Russian legation itself. On the first day of the year, a day devoted to receptions he scarcely addressed a word to Prince Kourakin, who, very attentive to little things, did not fail to remark it, and concluded that the mission of M. de Nesselrode was either too late, or displeasing, and that there was no chance of its success. A matter of still graver import was the rumour of the orders given by Napoleon, and a rumour, however slight, always reaches the ear of an ambassador, however ill-informed. Napoleon had urged the exercise of the greatest discretion, but so many persons had to be confided in, and some of the matters to be executed were in themselves so difficult of concealment, that, although secrecy might be possible with respect to the public, it was not so with respect to a diplomatist who, moreover, paid well for the offices of treachery. In fact M. de Czernicheff, aide-de-camp to the Emperor Alexander, who was frequently in Paris, had purchased the services of a clerk, who betrayed the most important secrets of the Minister of War. By these various means, therefore, Prince Kourakin learned Napoleon's orders, and these orders could not leave him in doubt respecting the certainty of speedy hostilities.

In the first place he had ordered M. de Cessac, who had become Minister of War, to prepare the *senatus-consultum* for the levy of the conscription of 1812; a measure which was necessarily very significant since, the ranks having al-

ready received the whole conscription of 1811, were sufficiently filled for an armament of simple precaution. In the next place Napoleon had demanded of the German governments that they should furnish him with their complete contingents, and had demanded this not only of the chief of them, who were capable of keeping a secret, but even of the little Princes, by whom it was certain to be speedily divulged. He had written in cypher to Marshals Soult and Suchet to send him immediately the regiments named *de la Vistula*; and had given orders for the immediate return of the young guard, which was cantoned in Castille, and of the dragoons.

Independently of these orders Napoleon had marched upon the Rhine, not the detachments of the guard which were in Paris itself, which would have caused too great a sensation, but those which were stationed in the environs, such, for example, as the regiments of the Dutch guard. He urged on the purchases of horses which had not, in his opinion been executed with sufficient rapidity, and set in motion battalions d'équipages of which the organisation was complete. Finally he sent orders directing the movement of the army of Italy. This army having to traverse Lombardy, the Tyrol, Bavaria, Saxony, to reach the line on the Vistula occupied by the army under Marshal Davoust, had to commence its march a month earlier than the others to enable it to be equally advanced. However, as of all the measures which he had to take this would be the most striking, since he could not displace the army of Italy, and send it forth from its cantonments to overrun half Europe without taking a decided step in respect to the war, he was anxious to keep this matter perfectly secret, and communicated with Prince Eugene without the intervention of the public offices. He directed this Prince to dispose of his divisions at Brescia, Verona, and Trieste for the middle of January, in order that they might be ready to march towards the end of the same month with all their matériel; and he demanded that they should be prepared to set out in January although he did not expect that he would require them until February, because his great experience had taught him that a month was not too much to allow for inevitable delays. He had planned to send forward the Italian troops towards the end of February, and of not moving those of Marshal Davoust until the course of March, but to throw them rapidly upon the Vistula should the news of the movement of the army of Italy draw the Russians to the Niemen. Otherwise he proposed to push slowly his columns on the Vistula so as to have them there by the middle of May, to carry from thence by the middle

of May to the Pregel, and by the middle of June to the Niemen. By thus allowing three months for the movements from the Elbe to the Niemen, both men and horses would be able to arrive without being fatigued, and reach the theatre of war completely effective and well equipped.

Of all these measures the Russian legation was ignorant only of the departure of the army of Italy, with which Prince Eugene was alone acquainted, and the recall of the Polish troops of Spain which had been made by sealed despatches to Marshals Soult and Suchet. It was acquainted, however, with all the others and could not, therefore, retain any doubt respecting the commencement of the war in 1812. Prince Kourakin, in fact, had not retained any since the commencement of January, since the reserve, evidently intended, which had been kept towards him with respect to the mission of M. de Nesselrode, the unusual coldness which had been displayed towards him, and which was in great contrast with the civilities of which he had hitherto been the object; and finally, all the proceedings with which public rumour alone was sufficient to make him acquainted, were equivalent to the most warlike demonstration. Prince Kourakin, therefore, despatched on the 13th of January an extraordinary courier to inform his court of what he had learned and observed, and to express his opinion that war was certain! and that it was absolutely necessary to prepare for it. He even demanded instructions with respect to extreme cases, such as, for example, the event of his having to leave Paris. Perhaps his great sensibility to the cold manner in which he had been treated by the court had strengthened his convictions; but if his displeasure on this account had alone caused him to declare that the French had resolved on war, this displeasure had but served to enlighten him with respect to the truth, for at this moment war had certainly been irrevocably determined on.

When Prince Kourakin's despatches arrived at Saint Petersburg every preparation had been made for M. de Nesselrode's mission to Paris, and it only awaited the arrival of a courier from Constantinople. Unhappily this courier did not arrive, and M. de Romanzoff, full of jealousy of the young diplomatist, took an unfair advantage of this delay. The courier sent by Prince Kourakin had reached Saint Petersburg on the 27th and excited there the most lively sensation. The perusal of the despatches which he brought filled all minds with the Ambassador's opinion, and no one could any longer doubt that war was imminent. Already the general opinion had inclined to the belief that this would be the actual issue, and rather than submit as Prussia or



Austria, to all the demands of Napoleon, rather than sacrifice what was left of Russian commerce, all Russia resolved to brave the last extremities. As, however, there is always a great difference between the expectation of a fact and a fact itself, and a difference to which the minds of men are extremely sensitive, the public mind in Saint Petersburg was now profoundly agitated, and to such an extent that M. de Lauriston was able to say without exaggeration that all Saint Petersburg was filled with consternation.

It was considered in Europe at that period so great a hazard to brave Napoleon, his genius, and his valiant armies; there were so many terrible recollections such as those of Austerlitz, d'Jéna, d'Eylau, and Friedland, that even those who were inspired with the most noble sentiments of patriotism, or the most bitter enmity of aristocratic Europe against us, could not fail to experience a sensation of terror at the idea of recommencing a struggle which had always succeeded so ill. And indeed, if Fortune were this time unpropitious, Russia would be exposed to the danger of falling to that second rank to which Prussia and Austria had descended, and of which all Russians had so great a horror. Providence, which keeps its secrets so well, had not yet declared its secret on this point, and the Russians were as ignorant that they were on the eve of their grandeur as Napoleon that he was on the eve of his fall. But even of the secrets of Providence genius can always discover some trace, and they are sometimes unveiled even to the glance of passion.

Passion, which so generally blinds men and so rarely enlightens them, nevertheless, on the present occasion assisted the Russians to discern a portion of the truth. The catastrophe of Charles XII. returned vividly to their remembrance; the recent distress of Masséna in Portugal; which had been caused by means of devastations, and which had been published throughout all Europe with a kind of barbarous boasting, was no less eagerly considered; and everywhere throughout Russia it was declared that without destroying the fields of others, as the English had done, they would be able, by devastating their own country, to place Napoleon in a position more frightful still than that in which the English had placed Masséna. The general cry, therefore, of the whole Russian army was, that it would devastate the whole country, and then withdraw into the farthest part of Russia, and that it would then be seen how the terrible Emperor of the French would be able to subsist in the midst of desolated plains, totally wanting in food for his soldiers as in forage for his cattle, and that, like another

Pharaoh he would perish in the vastness of the desert, as the other in the vastness of the deep. This plan of avoiding great engagements, and of retreating and devastating the country had obtained a hold on every mind. There were even amongst the officers of Alexander men of unusually ardent temperament who advised that the desert should be carried forward, and that for this purpose they should invade Poland and old Prussia, and after having destroyed their rich granaries immediately retreat.

Alexander, who shared the general opinion that Napoleon should be opposed by means of long tracts of country and devastation, was resolved to decline battles and to retreat into the very interior of Russia to avoid them, only pausing to fight when the French should be exhausted with hunger and fatigue; but he did not concur with those who urged the immediate devastation of old Prussia and Poland. To take the offensive and to advance was to offer opportunities to the great gainer of battles, and to share with him, also, the wrongs of aggression, at least in the eyes of the populations, and Alexander, before demanding of his nation the least sacrifices, was anxious that the whole universe should be convinced that he was not the aggressor. Finally, Alexander had a reason for declining to adopt this course of conduct which he expressed least, but which nevertheless influenced him considerably, and this was, that being anxious to preserve peace as long as it could honorably be preserved, he was unwilling to compromise it by an imprudent initiative. In the meantime M. de Romanzoff, whose policy had been founded on the French alliance, and who would lose by the war the very basis of his system, and the true motive for his admittance into the councils of the empire, still flattered himself that when Napoleon should be on the Vistula, and Alexander on the Niemen, it would be possible to bring about a species of armed negotiation, and that on the very eve of the frightful contest the various powers would probably be more pliable; that Napoleon having seen more clearly the difficulties attending this distant warfare would be less exacting, and that an explanation would be come to at the last moment, and a means of compromise discovered which would save the honour of both. This was a feeble hope, doubtless, but it was, nevertheless, one which neither Alexander nor M. de Romanzoff were willing to renounce.

In accordance with these views Alexander, with the assistance of his ministers and some generals who were in his confidence, determined on the plan to be adopted for the conduct of the war. It was decided that there should be two considerable armies, and their elements were already assem-

bled, the one on the Dwina and the other on the Dnieper, two rivers which, rising within a few leagues distance of each other, flow, the first towards Riga and the Baltic, and the second towards Odessa and the Black Sea, thus describing a vast transverse line from the north west to the south east, and constituting, so to say, the interior frontier of the great Russian empire. These two armies having their advanced posts on the Niemen, were to retreat at the approach of the enemy, forming a complete mass of two hundred and fifty thousand men, to whom it was hoped that reserves to the number of one hundred thousand might speedily be added. A third army, of forty thousand men, was to be a corps of observation in the direction of Austria, uniting with that of the Danube which amounted to sixty thousand men, and these, according to the course of events in Turkey, would proceed to the theatre of war and thus increase to four hundred thousand men the sum total of the Russian forces.

These resources, independently of the vast tracts of space, of the climate, and the projected devastation, were of considerable force, and supported the confidence of the Russians. But other motives contributed still further to fortify them. The Russians thought that in this struggle public opinion would play an important part, and that those who were able to obtain it in their favour would thereby have a great advantage. They knew that France herself, although condemned to silence, did not approve of these incessant wars, in which blood was poured out for objects which it did not understand, since its frontiers had not only attained but even passed the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees. And that notwithstanding the immense enthusiasm for the person of Napoleon, a bitter hatred had begun to arise against him and would burst forth at the first reverse; that this hatred was, in Germany, by no means concealed, but, on the contrary, eager and public, and more violent than even in Spain, where the exhaustion consequent on the war had somewhat relaxed it; that in the allied states, such as Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Saxony, the conscription would speedily become the most odious of institutions; that in Prussia, moreover, in addition to the distress caused by continual wars was that caused by the loss of its pristine greatness; that in Austria, where an outward appearance of calm had prevailed since the peace and the marriage, the court cherished a hatred which was more bitter than ever against France, regretting, as it did, the loss of Italy, and above all of Illyria; and that finally, in the North, in Poland even, there were sufferings which very much diminished the enthusiasm for Napoleon,

and procured adherents to the opinions of certain great Polish lords who thought Poland should be reconstituted, not by France, but by Russia, and that the crown of the Jagellons should be placed on the head of Alexander, or a prince of his family. And certainly unfortunate Poland, which had no other wealth than its corn, its wood, and its hemp, which could no longer be transported by the port of Dantzic since the continental blockade, suffered horribly ; its nobility being ruined, its people overburdened by imposts, and the city of Dantzic, converted from a rich commercial city into a fortified town, reduced to the last state of misery. General Rapp, an accomplished courtier, but nevertheless a man of good heart, had been so touched by the spectacle of these evils that he had pointed them out to Marshal Davoust, declaring that if the French army suffered a single reverse there would be an insurrection from the Rhine to the Niemen. The cold and stern Davoust himself, although caring little for sufferings which he was always ready to share with his soldiers, and observing with respect to public affairs the silence which he imposed upon others, had nevertheless transmitted to Napoleon the letters he received on this subject from General Rapp, accompanying them with these remarkable words ; “ I remember, in fact, Sire, that had not your Majesty performed miracles at Ratisbonne in 1809, our situation in Germany would have been a very different one.

Those were sad truths which, added to the consciousness of their real strength inspired the Russians with a confident determination to enter upon a formidable struggle, and, said they, if war be pregnant with cruel misfortunes, it also frequently affords considerable advantages ; should Napoleon, as Charles XII., find in Russia the plains of Pultawa, all Germany would rise in his rear, the allied princes would be forced by their people to withdraw from his alliance, Poland herself would conceive the idea of obtaining her reconstitution at other hands than those of Napoleon, and France, exhausted by the shedding of her blood, and worn out by the sacrifices to which she was compelled by a boundless and unreasonable ambition, would no longer be capable of those efforts which, at former periods, she had made for the support of Napoleon’s greatness.

These motives confirmed Alexander in the resolution of putting Napoleon completely in the wrong, and of declining to take the initiative, of remaining on the bank of the Niemen without passing it, and awaiting in a formidable but reserved attitude the approach of the enemy. This course of conduct, appeared to him the best both in a military and political point



of view without taking into account that it preserved a chance of peace which at the last moment might disarm the whole world.

The Russian diplomatic agents were directed to act in the spirit of this policy. There was evidently nothing to be hoped for from Prussia and Austria; but the alliances which were offered with ardour and even with importunity, were those of England, and (is it credible?) of Sweden. An alliance with England was natural and legitimate, and was inevitably the first blow struck between France and Russia. The English cabinet, in its impatience to conclude this alliance, had availed itself of a demand of saltpetre made by Russia to neutral commerce, to send to Riga twelve vessels filled with powder; and had then despatched to Sweden an agent, Mr. Thornton, who, on the appearance of the least hope that he would be received was to throw himself into the first Russian port that should be open to him; and in the meantime he was to endeavour to enter into communication with the Russian legation through the Swedish cabinet.

Nothing, we must add, could have been more natural than this impatience of the British Cabinet, and the only objection that could be made to it is that it was too petulant, and by its over-eagerness exposed itself to the reproach, if a reproach were still possible, of those whom she had desired to disunite for ever. But Sweden, or to speak more precisely, the Prince who owed to France his advancement to the throne of Sweden, employed himself with the greatest eagerness to seek out our enemies and to form alliances against us. Instead of being astonished at the spectacle of this dishonest heart, we are rather revolted; and it is one of the most striking portions of the extraordinary scene which at this moment was presented to the eyes of the world.

We have noticed the manner in which Prince Bernadotte, elected Crown Prince of Sweden, had already declared himself in active and undisguised hostility to Napoleon, with the occasion and object of this change of policy. The refusal of Norway, an act which formed so honourable an exception to the Emperor's general conduct, and the contemptuous silence enjoined on the French embassy, awakened in his heart the old hatred long nourished against Napoleon, and which had for its source, however incredible it may appear, simple envy. Naturally of an envious disposition he presumed to look with an evil eye on the man who should have ever remained far beyond the mark of his jealousy, such was the pre-eminence of fame and station on the side of General Bonaparte above all the claims of General Bernadotte. That he should have looked with malignity on the glory of Moreau, Masséna,

Lannes, Davoust, men a thousand-fold his superiors, might have been conceived ; but for such a sentiment towards Napoleon there was required the very frenzy of envy kindled in a little heart and mean spirit. Invested for a time with the regency, in consequence, as has been narrated, of the bad health of the king, then, though deprived of the post from the sovereign's terror at an excessive alteration in the relations with France, still in secret the chief mover of the national policy, he had suddenly gone over to the parties originally opposed to his succession, namely, the English faction, composed of the trading and landed interests which found their advantage in the interdicted commerce, and the noblesse whose principle was hatred of France and innovation. To them the tone of his language, more or less distinctly expressed according to circumstances, but always remarkable for imprudence, was that he had determined to be no slave of Napoleon's, that he desired to be a Swede, and not a Frenchman, and that desiring above all things the prosperity of his new country he would never lend himself to the convenience of France, which might induce her to ruin Sweden by the deprivation of its trade. To those on the other hand, comprising all the friends of France, who had accomplished his election, in their passionate emulation of the revolution of 1789, their regrets for the old grandeur of Sweden, and the military reputation which led them to choose a French General, his talk was of honour, fatherland, valour, while, without explaining the manner in which it was to be done, he engaged to lead them to victory and to restore the greatness of their nation. Besides flattering all parties in the state on the topics most dear to them, he endeavoured to establish relations with the English and Russian legations, the latter of which was alone officially recognised at Stockholm, by taking care that each should have what might be most favourable to its interests. To both he asserted his readiness to break off the yoke of France, and obey the signal whenever the great powers should resolve on giving it, boasting that he knew the weak points in the genius and resources of Napoleon, and would impart the secret how to overthrow him. Even in the French armies General Bernadotte, he said, was highly prized, but would England and Russia but establish good intelligence with Sweden, there was no end to the advantage which it might prove to them ; for, as soon as Napoleon should have advanced into the interior of Poland, where he might have been annihilated in 1807, and was in fact only saved by the intervention of Bernadotte, he the Crown Prince of Sweden, could come down with thirty thousand or even fifty thousand should he be subsidized, and

raise the whole of Germany in the rear of the French host. In return for his aid he demanded, not indeed Finland, of the importance of which to Russia he was well aware, but Norway which, he argued, it was unreasonable to leave to Denmark, the steadfast ally of Napoleon, and, therefore, traitor to the cause of Europe.

These confidences made with incredible indiscretion to England and Russia, had excited a kind of distrust, and gained their author but little esteem. When addressed to the King of Prussia in a secret interview demanded of his Ambassador they had disgusted the sense of honour in that Monarch, who had not dared to denounce this faithless child of France, but had not failed to warn us to beware of him. As for the powers which were either actually at war with us, as was England, or about to be, as Russia, they had behaved cautiously towards an enemy of Napoleon, whom they were willing to make use of whilst they hesitated to trust him. In order to enter into close relations with both of these powers, the new Swedish Prince had proposed to employ the influence long enjoyed by Sweden in Turkey to negotiate a peace between the Turks and the Russians; and thus this personage who had only so lately appeared on the world's stage, and was so unexpected an enemy to France, offered to reconcile England with Russia, and Russia with the Porte, and was anxious to be at any price the connecting link of these various political chains, the sword in the hands of these coalitions.

In the meantime, Alexander, the object of whose system of reserve was, as we have already said, to place his adversary completely in the wrong, and to remain free to accept a peace at the last moment, was by no means willing to yield to the impatience of the English, or to the intrigues of Sweden. He had made the very natural reflection that when the rupture with France should have once been accomplished, an alliance with England would be an immediate result, and be effected on such terms as he might choose. He refused, therefore, the vessels filled with gunpowder, forced them to depart from the waters of the Riga, and intimated to Mr. Thornton that the time had not yet come for his appearance at St. Petersburg. As regarded Sweden, since its alliance with Russia was less a matter of certainty, since this power might, in its ambitious restlessness, be alienated from Russia, by the rejection of its advances, as it had been alienated from Napoleon by a disappointment suffered at his hands, Alexander determined to listen with apparent attention to its incredible proposals, and to take that time for their consideration which their importance demanded. He sent magnificent

furs to Prince Bernadotte and heaped on him the most flattering testimonies of esteem. In the meantime Turkey, which had obstinately rejected the conditions which had been proposed to it, and which was unwilling at any price to abandon Moldavia as far as the Sereth, to consent to a Russian Protectorate over Wallachia and Servia, to the cession of a portion of territory however small along the Caucasus, or the payment of a war indemnity, it felt quite certain that within a few days Russia pressed by the armies of France would be compelled to resign all her pretensions, and Alexander, accordingly, modified still farther the proposed conditions, renouncing the protectorate of Servia and Wallachia, the territory which had been demanded along the Caucasus, and the war indemnity, but still insisting on the whole of Bessarabia, on Moldavia as far as the Sereth, and flattered himself that by obtaining peace on these new conditions, he would secure full liberty to employ his forces against the French army.

Such were the plans of Russia, and they were plans which as we cannot fail to perceive, were very well conceived and very well adapted to their object. In the situation to which matters had now come there could be no object attained by M. de Nesselrode's mission to Paris, and it was, therefore, abandoned to the great, but unwise, satisfaction of M. de Romanzoff. Alexander intimated this new resolution to M. de Lauriston with a grief which he did not dissemble, telling him that the courier which had left Paris on the 13th of January had brought tidings which allowed no hope that peace could yet be preserved, and that he was excessively grieved at this since peace had always been the object of his desire. He repeated, as he had already repeated a hundred times, the measures he had been willing to take and the sacrifices he was ready to submit to for the preservation of the French alliance, to prove what he called his *innocence*; but declared that no earthly power should drive him to any other terms; that he could sustain a war of ten years if necessary, and would retreat to the farthest part of Siberia rather than sink to the position then endured by Austria and Prussia; that Napoleon, in provoking this rupture, had acted in a manner very contrary to his own interests, for that England was already near the end of her resources, and that by continuing to keep the continent closed against her commerce, and turning against Lord Wellington the forces then prepared against Russia, Great Britain would be forced to a peace within a year; Alexander continued, that for his part, he would remain inaccessible in the line which he had traced out, his troops would remain behind the Niemen, and would not be the



first to pass it; that he was anxious that his nation and the world should be witnesses that he was not the aggressor, and that he carried his scruples in this respect even to the extent of refusing to listen to one of the propositions of England, that he had refused the gunpowder they had offered him, and he declared on his word of honour that he would in like manner dismiss Mr. Thornton should he present himself. Finally, Alexander said that in this state of things the mission of M. de Nesselrode was no longer possible, that not only his dignity but his common sense rendered it impossible that he should now attempt to send it, since it could have no effectual result.

Upon M. de Lauriston's insisting that M. de Nesselrode would still be well received in Paris, Alexander related to him all that we have narrated respecting Napoleon's significant silence respecting the proposed mission, and his coldness towards Prince Kourakin from the time that this mission had been talked about, and concluded by declaring that it was known from other sources that Napoleon was averse to it; by these other sources Alexander meant Prussia, who, with the best intentions and believing that she might be of service towards the maintenance of peace had communicated Napoleon's reflections respecting the inconveniences of giving too much *éclat* to M. de Nesselrode's journey; and thus by its very zeal for peace had aided in bringing about its rupture.

During the course of the above conversation Alexander had appeared more moved than ever, but nevertheless thoroughly resolute, and had evidently spoken as a man who had no hesitation in expressing his aversion to war because he had determined to wage it, and with terrible energy. He left M. de Lauriston as affected as himself, for this excellent patriot regarded the approaching war with a species of despair, for he saw what must be its results. On the 3rd of January M. de Nesselrode transmitted to his court all accounts of the communications which had taken place between himself and Alexander with scrupulous exactness. His courier arrived at Paris on the 17th of February; and had been preceded by others who had carried almost precisely similar tidings, and had left little room for doubt that, as the last positively announced, M. de Nesselrode's mission would not set out from Russia.

Napoleon, by becoming sure that M. de Nesselrode would not come to Paris attained his object, but nevertheless, Russia appeared far too resolute, and although she was apparently too much intimidated to venture to take the initiative, he learned that there were not wanting bold spirits amongst her children who urged that her armies should cross

the Niemen and anticipate the French at Königsberg and Dantzic. He considered, therefore, that it was time to conclude his alliances, and to set his troops in motion so that he might not be the last to arrive on the Vistula, and he took care to accompany these decisive steps with some acts of policy calculated to calm the sensation they would produce in the Russian cabinet by affording it certain hopes of peace.

Up to this time Napoleon had not wished to conclude his alliances from fear of too much alarming Russia, and he was excessively dilatory with regard to unhappy Prussia, which was in a constant state of fear that these long delays\*concealed some abominable scheme. It will be remembered that Napoleon had imperiously demanded of her that she should cease from preparing her armaments, threatening to seize Berlin, Spandau, Graudentz, Colberg, the King himself, the army, and all that remained of the monarchy of the great Frederick, if she did not put a stop to her preparations; and, on the other hand, giving his word of honour, that if she yielded to his wishes on this point he would conclude with her a treaty of alliance of which the first article should stipulate the integrity of her territory. Since the month of October he had held her in suspense under various pretexts, and at length, in the month of February, when matters had arrived at a point at which delay was no longer possible, Napoleon very much delighted the King and M. de Hardenberg by announcing to them that he was ready to sign the treaty of alliance. The King of Prussia, whom Russia had treated very harshly in 1805, and had completely deserted in 1807, considered himself under obligations only to his country and his crown, and being convinced, moreover, in common with all the world, that Napoleon would still be the victor declared himself his ally, since it was impossible to remain neutral. His policy at this moment was, as he had to furnish Napoleon with a contingent, to give him one which should be as strong as possible, in order that on the conclusion of peace his recompense might be the greater, consisting of the restitution of fortresses, the diminution of the war contributions, and an extension of territory. He offered, therefore, as many as a hundred thousand men, all good soldiers, commanded by the worthy General de Gramont, and ready to serve with good will as soon as they should see in the French alliance a means of obtaining the restoration of their country. As the price of this aid the King of Prussia demanded the restoration of one of the fortresses of the Oder which had remained in pledge in the hands of Napoleon (as Glogau for example), a release from the fifty or sixty millions which the Prussian

treasury still owed to France, and finally an extension of territory in proportion to the services that the Prussian army should render. Frederick William was also anxious that some territory, and his wishes pointed especially to Silesia, should be regarded as neutral, that he might retire into it far from the tumult of arms, for Berlin, situated on the route of all the armies in Europe, could not but be involved in the war.

It was Napoleon's policy neither to destroy nor to raise Prussia. It was sufficient for his purposes that she should be in subjection and disarmed, and he had not sufficient confidence in the Prussian soldiers to permit any great number of them to be armed. He did not precisely distrust either their valour or their loyalty, but he considered with good reason that on the occasion of any reverse being suffered by his arms they would be carried along with the current of the Germanic sentiment; he was unwilling, therefore, that Prussia should arm more soldiers than were permitted to her by the existing treaties (which number was forty-two thousand), and thereby engage in heavy expenses which would afford her a pretext for not fulfilling her pecuniary engagements towards France. Influenced by these various motives, therefore, he rejected the propositions made to him by Prussia, declaring that twenty thousand Prussians would be sufficient, since he did not so much require troops with which to combat the Russians as provisions and baggage horses, and that, consequently, he could not release the contributions due from Prussia, and could only consent to receive horses, cattle, and grain in part satisfaction of the money she still owed. He refused, also, to surrender Glogau, for this fortress, he said, was on his line of operations, and as for the neutralisation of Silesia he very reasonably remarked, that, although he was very willing to admit it, it could not be guaranteed without the consent of Russia also. As for the integrity of the existing Prussian dominions, and a revision, to her advantage, of her frontier line on the conclusion of peace, he could make ample promises without any difficulty.

Prussia could not dispute with Napoleon in the state into which she had fallen, and consequently, by a treaty signed on the 24th of February, it was agreed that Prussia should furnish twenty thousand troops under the immediate command of a Prussian General, but bound to obey the orders of the General of the corps of the French army with which they might serve; and these twenty thousand men whilst remaining in Prussia were to be distributed as follows: four thousand at Colberg, two thousand at Potsdam (to guard the

royal residence), and the remainder in Silesia. The war contribution still due from Prussia to France was definitively fixed at forty-eight millions, of which twenty-six millions were to be paid in mortgage bills, fourteen in kind, and eight in silver, these last to be paid at the conclusion of the existing war. For the fourteen millions payable in kind were to be furnished fifteen thousand horses, forty-four thousand cattle, and a considerable amount of wheat, oats, and forage. It was agreed also that these supplies in kind should be conveyed to the Vistula and the Oder.

On these conditions Napoleon guaranteed to Prussia the territory she then had, and in the event of obtaining a prosperous issue in the Russian war, promised an extension of frontier in recompense for its former losses; and this treaty could not fail to be approved of by all persons of sense, for being under no obligation to Russia, the King of Prussia was right to seek for safety where he could hope to find it. As for Napoleon, as it was too late to adopt the policy of re-establishing Prussia as a great and powerful kingdom which, holding everything from him would necessarily remain faithful to him, he chose the best course possible when he withdrew a portion of its soldiers, disarmed the others, and took its horses.

The position of affairs with regard to Austria was different; for Austria was under no fear of the loss of its very existence, and no need of the French alliance, and so far from being as Prussia was, in the power of four hundred Frenchmen, had Italy almost at her mercy from the moment that Prince Eugene departed from it. She had desired, therefore, to escape from the French alliance, to remain a spectator of the conflict, and to share with the victor some of the spoils of the vanquished. She believed that Napoleon would be the victor, and would rather, therefore, ally herself with him than with Alexander; but, for the greater safety, would have preferred to be the ally of neither. There were no means, however, of escaping from Napoleon's iron hand; it was necessary to declare either for or against him, and after all, his triumph being more probable than that of Alexander, by declaring for him Austria would probably regain Trieste, which of all its losses was the one which Austria felt most severely.

The court of Vienna consented therefore to form an alliance with France, but demanded that the greatest possible secrecy should be kept with regard to it, and that this secrecy should be observed as long as possible, for, said M. de Metternich, of all Austria only he and the Emperor were agreeable to this alliance, and if such a negotiation should be



rumoured too soon, an insurmountable opposition would very probably be excited. Moreover, it was urged, it would thus be possible to surprise Russia by the unexpected presence in Volhynia of a corps d'armée.

Napoleon consented to the stipulated secrecy, for it was sufficient for him that he could rely on Austria, and of but little importance when the alliance between them should become known; and he even shared in the desire to keep the treaty with Austria secret, in accordance with his constant wish to avoid as far as possible forcing the Russians into active war.

It was agreed, therefore, by a treaty signed on the 16th of March that France and Austria should reciprocally guarantee the integrity of their actual states; that for the present war Austria should furnish a corps of thirty thousand men, which should be ready at Lenberg on the 15th of May, provided that at that time the French army by its offensive movements should have drawn to it the Russian forces; that this corps, commanded by an Austrian General (the Prince of Schwarzenberg), should be under the direct orders of Napoleon; and that, finally, if the kingdom of Poland should be re-established, France, in recompense for the assistance afforded her by Austria, would grant her a compensation in Illyria, and that if the war should have a prosperous issue, would behave towards the Emperor Francis, with regard to the new division of territories, in conformity with the friendship which should unite a father-in-law and a son-in-law.

This treaty engaged Austria to furnish but a very feeble assistance to Napoleon, and left it possible for her to say at St. Petersburg that her alliance with him was only a matter of form, and entered into for the sole purpose of avoiding a war with France for which she, Austria, was not prepared. She could also add, if she chose, that in acting thus she had only acted towards Russia as Russia had acted towards herself in 1809.

Having concluded these treaties of alliance Napoleon directed his whole attention to setting his troops in motion. He had already directed the army of Italy to concentrate itself at the foot of the Alps, and Marshal Davoust to be always ready to throw himself upon the Vistula should the Russians, which was very improbable, be the first to pass the Niemen. All being now prepared, he ordered the first marches, but in such a manner that the Niemen should not be reached before the month of May. Let us glance at the manner in which he had distributed the various portions of his vast army, which was the largest which had been seen

since the ages of those victorious barbarians who had displaced whole populations, and was certainly the largest regular army which had ever existed, being the vastest collection ever known of strong, well disciplined soldiers, free from that mass of women, children, and servants, which formerly formed three fourths of the numbers of invading armies.

Although Napoleon had delegated to Marshal Davoust on account of his peculiar talents, the organisation of the greater portion of the army, he had not appointed him to the command of as many troops as he had entrusted to him to discipline, for he reserved to himself exclusively the disposition of the large masses. He desired only that Marshal Davoust, being the nearest to the theatre of war, and in the most favourable position for active proceedings should the Russians cross the Niemen, should have a force sufficient to stop them; and confided to him, therefore, five French divisions which had been formed out of the three old divisions, Morand, Friant, and Gudin, and had in each regiment from three to five war battalions. To these was to be added as a sixth division, a Polish division, which was already at Dantzic, but formed no part of the garrison, and was composed of good troops who had successfully made the campaign in 1809 against the Austrians. Napoleon had preserved the old distribution of his cavalry into light, employed in reconnaissances, and cavalry of reserve employed in attacks in line. The latter had a certain portion of light cavalry in its ranks but chiefly consisted of heavy and medium cavalry, that is to say, of cuirassiers, lancers, and dragoons. This reserve was divided into four corps; the first, comprising five regiments of light cavalry and the two divisions of cuirassiers, was added to the army of Marshal Davoust; who had, therefore, about eighty-two thousand infantry and artillery, three thousand five hundred light cavalry particularly attached to his corps, and eleven or twelve thousand cavalry of reserve; the whole amounting to ninety-six or ninety-seven thousand of the best troops in Europe. They bore the title of the first corps, and their head-quarters were at Hamburg.

Napoleon confided also to Marshal Davoust the Prussian division of sixteen or seventeen thousand men which was under the immediate orders of General Grawert, and the number of troops under the Marshal's command was thus raised to one hundred and fourteen thousand.

Napoleon gave to Marshal Oudinot the second corps, which comprised, together with the divisions stationed in Holland, the remainder of the troops organised by Marshal Davoust, but not placed under his command. These were the

two French divisions Legrand and Verdier, formed from part of the ancient divisions of Masséna and Lannes, and a good Swiss division to which had been added some Croatian and Dutch battalions. With the light cavalry, the artillery, and a division of cuirassiers borrowed from the cavalry reserve, this corps numbered forty thousand troops almost as good as those of Marshal Davoust. Its head quarters were at Munster. Three or four thousand of the Prussian troops, at this time guarding Pillau, the Nehrung, and all the posts which close the Frische-Haff, were also intended to form a portion of the second corps.

Under the title of third corps Napoleon entrusted to Marshal Ney, of whose energy he wished to avail himself in this campaign, the remainder of the old troops of Lannes and Masséna, adding to them the Wurtemberg troops, which had already served under Marshal Ney, and thus forming a total of thirty-nine thousand men, infantry, artillery, and light cavalry; and as he proposed to employ Ney in the execution of vigorous enterprises, he also placed under his command the whole 2nd corps of the reserve cavalry, numbering about ten thousand men, chiefly cuirassiers. Marshal Ney's head quarters were fixed at Mayence.

The army of Prince Eugene was called the 4th corps, and consisted of two divisions of French infantry, including the best troops of the old army of Italy, an Italian division which had become very excellent, and some of the Royal guard, amounting altogether to about forty-five thousand soldiers of all arms. This corps was under the command, of course, of Prince Eugene, who had Junot for his principal lieutenant.

Napoleon assigned to the Polish army the title of the 5th corps. As we have before said, a Polish division in the pay of France had already been placed under Marshal Davoust, but there still remained two other Polish divisions which received the Emperor's pay, and were to be incorporated with the French troops. The Polish army properly so called was under the orders of Prince Poniatowski, who was in the service of the grand Duchy of Warsaw, and had already made under its orders the campaign of 1809; a campaign which was as honourable for the troops engaged in it as for the General who conducted it. This corps numbered about thirty-six thousand men of all arms, and had its head quarters at Warsaw. The Bavarians, to the number of twenty-five thousand men, who had served with the French since 1805, formed the 6th corps, and were entrusted to General St. Cyr, whom Napoleon raised from disgrace on account of his merit, and notwithstanding an indolence of temper which was often

the cause of great inconvenience. It was arranged that these Bavarians were to join the army of Italy at Bareuth, in order to fight by its side; for Napoleon had resolved to unite the Bavarians with the Italians, on account not only of the relationship, but the friendship also which united Prince Eugene with the court of Bavaria.

The Saxons to the number of seventeen thousand, good soldiers, and of all the Germans the least hostile to France, because she had restored Poland to their King, were placed under the orders of General Reynier, a skilful officer, well fitted to have the command of the Germans, and distinguished for his services in Spain and elsewhere. These Germans were named the 7th corps, and were, naturally, to serve with the Poles. They were ordered to assemble at Glogau on the Oder, and to proceed as quickly as possible to Kalisch, in order to be ready to hasten to the Vistula should the Poles have need of their aid. Finally, the Westphalians, carefully organised by King Jerome, but reckoning amongst their ranks many Hessians, who were more brave than affectionate to their new sovereign, formed the 8th corps, and were directed to take up a position in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg to the number of eighteen thousand men.

There remained two excellent bodies of troops, the reserve cavalry and the imperial guard. Of the four corps composing the former one had been attached to Marshal Davoust's corps, the other to Marshal Ney's, and one division of cuirassiers had been, besides, temporarily given to Marshal Oudinot; but Napoleon reserved to himself the right of resuming at need the immediate command of these corps himself. The portion of this magnificent cavalry which had not as yet been attached to any corps consisted of about fifteen thousand splendid horsemen, and was to march in connection with the imperial guard. As for the latter, it had now become an army in itself, numbering no less than forty-seven thousand men, and had been divided into two corps, the young guard, comprising the tirailleurs and voltigeurs, and the old guard, and consisting of the chasseurs, and foot grenadiers, the cavalry, the artillery reserve, and the regiments of the Vistula, who were worthy by reason of their sentiments of serving in the ranks of the Imperial guard.

The first corps of the guard was under the orders of Marshal Mortier, the second under the old Marshal Lefebvre. Firmer Generals could not have been appointed to the command of more genuine soldiers. The guard had as yet no distinct rallying point, and departed clandestinely from Paris



and its environs, one regiment after the other, with two provisional destinations, Berlin and Dresden; the intention being that as soon as the Emperor proceeded to the army the whole guard should assemble around him. We must add to this long enumeration the great body of sappers and miners, pontonniers, and workmen of all sorts; the artillery, which comprised all that was necessary to the service of this arm; and finally, the baggage train, conducted by eighteen thousand men.

Such was the active army alone; the army which was to cross the Niemen, and penetrate into the interior of Russia. Without taking into account the sick, the detached troops, of which there were a considerable number, and the Austrians, who were far from the theatre of operations, this army presented an enormous force of 423,000 soldiers under arms, strong, and well disciplined; 300,000 being infantry, 70,000 cavalry, 30,000 artillery; and carrying with them a thousand pieces of cannon, six pontoon equipages, and a month's provisions. And if Napoleon's orders were executed they would soon have with them two months' provisions instead of one.

The imagination is confounded when it contemplates these enormous numbers, which are not fictitious and inclusive of a crowd of persons not bearing arms, as is the case with the descriptions of armies by historians ancient and modern, who have almost always taken their information from popular rumour, and seldom from state documents, and have never taken into account the deficiency arising from sickness, the absence of detachments, and desertion. Nor were these all the troops which Napoleon had prepared for this gigantic struggle, after which, as he rightly said, he must be the real master of the world, or the most completely vanquished of any warrior in the world's history. By no means disregarding the terrible resentments with which his route would be seamed, as it were, from the Rhine to the Niemen, he placed on his rear a powerful army of reserve, of which we will present to the reader an account of the strength, the various nationalities, and the distribution.

Employing with much tact all the officers who had done good service in Spain, but had quarrelled with those who directed the operations in that country, Napoleon had chosen Marshal Victor, Duke de Bellune, for the command of Berlin from the time that the expeditionary army should have passed this capital. He reserved a French division, the 12th, composed of two good light regiments and several fourth battalions, under General Partouneaux, the troops of Bergen and Baden, and a portion of the soldiers in the dépôts

of Marshals Davoust and Oudinot appointed to the guard of the important fortification of Magdeburg. These troops, amounting altogether to thirty-eight or thirty-nine thousand men, formed the 9th corps, and were intended to guard Germany from the Elbe to the Oder.

There were still, in detached troops, in the fortifications such as Stettin, Custrin, Glogau, and Erfurt, ten thousand men; and in Hanover there was an immense cavalry depôt, where it was intended to mount nine thousand men who were to proceed thither from France on foot. Napoleon had decided that a portion of the fourth battalions drawn from Spain, and some sixth battalions belonging to the regiments intended to have six, should form a reserve corps entrusted to Marshal Augereau, and amounting to thirty-seven thousand men. Finally, he had had the precaution to send forward from fifteen to eighteen thousand recruits who were to supply the losses resulting from the first marches. There remained the division furnished by the little German Princes, amounting to five thousand men; and a division amounting to ten thousand with which Denmark, in consideration of our having incurred the enmity of Sweden in defence of its interests, had agreed to furnish us, in case Bernadotte should execute his project of making a descent on the rear of the French army. The latter division was to be assembled on the Holstein frontier.

By taking into account, in addition to the active army of 423,000 men, this army of reserve of 130,000, some detachments scattered amongst various little posts to the number of 12,000, the sick, the greater number of whom had been prostrated by the active service necessary in winter for the maintenance of the continental blockade, and who amounted to no less than 40,000, we find the enormous number of 600,000 men set in motion for the purposes of this formidable conflict.

Napoleon desired that the troops should remain in these positions during the month of May, that this month might be employed in bringing up the men and matériel which might have fallen into the rear, in throwing bridges over the various arms of the Vistula, in organizing the navigation of the Frische-Haff, in obtaining numerous waggons, horses, and oxen, from Prussia, furnishing the waggoners with stores, and mounting the cavalry which as yet wanted their horses; so that when the month of June had arrived, and the ground was covered with herbage, the troops might advance between Königsberg and Grodno, and cross the Niemen on the 15th or 20th of June. Napoleon's first care was to draw from Spain, Italy, France, and Germany, this crowd of troops, and

to march them with such care and method that they should not be exhausted by fatigue, or cover the routes with sick and stragglers, and that, especially, the Russians should not be too much excited by their advance and provoked to invade Poland and old Prussia.

We have already mentioned Napoleon's plan of effecting his contemplated movements under cover of Marshal Davoust's corps which, being between the Elbe and the Oder, had but eight or ten marches to make to reach the Vistula, an imposing body of 150,000 men, and to check the Russians should there be need. On the 1st of April Napoleon intended to set his masses of troops in motion, to advance these under Marshal Davoust to the Vistula between Thorn and Marienberg, to unite the Saxons with the Poles around Warsaw, and to post Jerome's Westphalians at Posen; then, on the Oder, in a second line, to post Oudinot at Stettin, Ney at Frankfort, and Prince Eugene with the Italians and Bavarians at Glogau. The guard, with the engineer and artillery corps, and the sappers and miners, being intended to form a third line between Dresden and Berlin.

Napoleon had already dispatched, as we have seen, the necessary orders to the army of Italy, which had the greatest distance to traverse, to join the troops assembled in Germany. When the first movement of this army, appointed to take place at the end of February, should have been effected, Napoleon proposed to march Marshal Davoust's troops on the Oder, the Saxons to Kalisch, in order that they might the more speedily join the Poles, and at the same time to advance in a second line Oudinot upon Berlin, Jerome upon Glogau, Ney upon Erfurt, and at the end of March to order a halt in order that all the corps might have time to rally their stragglers, and to bring up their baggage. These various points having been attained a halt was to be made up to the 15th of April, when the second and third lines were to advance on the Vistula and establish themselves in the following order; the Prussians in advance between Elbing, Pillau and Konigsberg, the troops of Davoust in the rear, between Marienberg and Marienwerder, those of Marshal Oudinot at Dantzic, those of Ney at Thorn, those of Eugene at Plock, the Poles, Saxons, and Westphalians, at Warsaw, the guard at Posen.

The instructions given by Napoleon were in conformity with this plan. Prince Eugene received orders to traverse the Tyrol so as to reach Ratisbonne at the beginning of March; the Bavarian Generals being directed to meet Prince Eugene at that point at the same time; and Ney, Jerome, and Oudinot, to place themselves immediately in line with the

right, coming from Italy. When these various movements should have been masked Marshal Davoust was ordered to throw the division Friant towards Swedish Pomerania, for the purpose of punishing Sweden for her conduct, to push his other divisions upon the Oder from Stettin to Custrin, to occupy with the Prussians Pillau and the points which command the navigation of the Frische-Haff, to unite himself by means of his cavalry with the Poles on the side of Warsaw, and if, contrary to all probability, the Russians should take the offensive, to march directly against them and drive them back beyond the Niemen.

Everything being thus arranged Napoleon was anxious to add diplomatic precautions to those which he had already taken with regard to the movements of his troops, in order to prevent the Russians from too speedily commencing the contest. He had already avoided the mission of M. de Nesselrode, and lest his manner of doing this should have driven Alexander from his temporizing system, he now endeavoured to obviate this danger, and with this object sent a despatch to M. de Lauriston in which he gave him a detailed account of his military movements, declaring that their object was to save from the hands of the Russians the rich granaries of Poland and old Prussia, and that, for the purpose of preventing them from ravaging these countries, it was necessary when the movement of the army of Italy, which would be the first, should be known, that M. de Lauriston should positively deny it, whilst admitting the march of a few Tuscan and Piedmontese conscripts, sent beyond the Alps to rejoin their corps in Germany, and that when it should be impossible any longer to deny it, he should admit the concentration of the French army on the Oder, but declare at the same time that this concentration did not necessarily imply war, any more than the concentration of the Russians on the Dwina and the Dnieper; and that even if the French army advanced a little beyond the Oder, it would only be taking a position precisely equivalent to that taken by the Russian armies, and whilst Napoleon was always rather ready to negotiate than to fight, he wished to take an attitude suitable to his dignity.

In this despatch M. de Lauriston was directed to put forward the idea of an armed negotiation rather than of a war already resolved on, to re-demand even, if the Russians still desired it, the mission of M. de Nesselrode, and in the last extremity, but only then, to offer a personal interview between the two Emperors on the Vistula. Finally, to prevent premature hostilities, M. de Lauriston was authorised to engage that the French armies should pause on the bank of the Vistula, but to do this only with the appearance of a



negotiator so anxious for peace that he exceeded his instructions ; and should all these ruses fail of their intended effect, M. de Lauriston was then to declare immediate war, demand his passports, and to compel the representatives of the allied courts to demand theirs.

So anxious was Napoleon to prevent a premature commencement of hostilities that he had recourse to a more direct means to the attainment of his object. He had with him at this time M. de Czernicheff, employed in frequent missions from Saint Petersburg to Paris, having numerous relations with the French court, and endowed with powers of fascination which he had made use of to corrupt one of the principal clerks of the minister of war. This fact began to be suspected, but it was not the moment to take public notice of this discovery. Napoleon devised the plan, therefore, to send M. de Czernicheff to Alexander with an earnest declaration of his pacific intentions, that he desired only the fulfilment of the conditions of Tilsit, and that he was perfectly ready to substitute a negotiation for war.

Napoleon's pretext for taking this step was a sufficiently natural one. In the course of their long conversations with M. de Lauriston, the Emperor Alexander and M. de Romanzoff had declared their opinion that Napoleon's desire to effect the reconstitution of the kingdom of Poland was evidently the real object he cherished in his heart, and the cause of his refusal to sign the convention of 1810. M. de Lauriston in his recent despatches had reported this conjecture of Alexander and his minister, and it was sufficient to furnish Napoleon with the pretext he desired.

In a long interview with M. de Czernicheff, he declared that by his last despatches from St. Petersburg he found that very false ideas were held with respect to his projects, since it was there supposed that he intended to reconstitute the kingdom of Poland, and that his military preparations had been made with this object. He assured M. de Czernicheff that this was a complete error, that he had never contemplated such an enterprise, and that if he had he would have attempted it in 1807 and 1809 ; that his refusal in 1810 of the convention by which Alexander demanded that he should engage never to re-establish the kingdom of Poland was because the form of the engagement required of him was dishonourable, and not because he entertained any idea of doing anything contrary to its spirit ; that his sole reason for arming was because he believed that Russia was withdrawing from her alliance with France for the purpose of making one with England ; that if this were her intention it was necessary that she should prepare for war, but that if, on the

contrary, she were willing to avoid serious hostilities with France she must close her ports against England, and aid him, Napoleon, in reducing her to submission by the destruction of her commerce.

Napoleon took great pains to produce on M. de Czernicheff's mind the impression that war was not inevitable, and would have succeeded in persuading him of this, had not the latter received only a few hours previously from the war office certain proofs of the activity of preparations so vast and so energetically carried forward, that it was impossible to reconcile them with the idea of a simple military demonstration destined to support negotiations. Nevertheless, M. de Czernicheff felt less certain of the imminence of the war after this interview, and received a letter from the Emperor Napoleon to the Emperor Alexander, in which, in polished and amicable but somewhat haughty words, he requested the latter to receive as from himself the communications he had made to him through M. de Czernicheff, and repeated, that however advanced the preparations for war might be on either side, they might yet receive a peaceable termination. On the same day M. de Bassano addressed a fresh despatch to M. de Lauriston, which completely developed Napoleon's desire of gaining time, so as to be able to take the initiative at the commencement of the war; and declared Napoleon to be as little desirous of an interview with Alexander, as of any negotiation save that which might be conducted by the 150,000 men whom he had set in motion, and whose march would probably induce the Russian cabinet to return to the system established at Tilsit, and would *replace Russia in the state of inferiority in which she then was.*

In the meantime murmurs began to arise, such as had not for a long time been heard in Paris, and revealed the depth of the sufferings caused by the dearth, the conscription, the levy of the national guards, and, finally, the war, by which all these evils were either produced or aggravated.

A frightful drought, which had lasted during the whole of the summer of 1811, had ruined the cereals throughout the whole of Europe, while it produced excellent wines, known by the name of *vins de la comète*. In France the price of wheat had risen to fifty, sixty, and seventy francs the hectolitre, a price very much higher than that which would be represented by the same figures in these days. The people could no longer purchase it, and in many parts of the country were guilty of turbulence which had the effect of increasing the value of provisions by causing them to be concealed.

Napoleon, formerly hostile to the revolutionary doctrines (and by this expression we understand not the pure and noble

principles of 89, but the senseless opinions born of the madness of popular passion), Napoleon, we say, formerly hostile to these doctrines, had gradually adopted them, in accordance with his usual habit of permitting himself to be carried in everything beyond the bounds of reason. Opposed to the regicide, he had yet in a moment of anger shot the Duc d'Enghien; a bitter censor of the civil constitution of the clergy, he yet held the Pope a prisoner at Savoy; thoroughly disapproving of the violence of the directory, he had nevertheless at this moment his prisons full of persons detained solely on religious grounds; despising, as he did, the revolutionary policy which had excited war throughout Europe, he was now at war with Europe for the purpose of placing his brothers on most of the thrones of the west; and finally, after having overwhelmed with sarcasms the administrative principles of 1793, such as the maximum, and the commercial rigours with respect to America, he had by his legislation with respect to colonial produce created throughout all Europe a system of commerce the most strange and violent that could be conceived, and which his war against English commerce to a certain degree excused. But with regard to cereals, in his eagerness to quiet the popular murmurs, and to free his policy from all connexion with the dearness of provisions, and to please, in short, the masses, on whom he had laid so many heavy burdens, he devised doctrines unworthy of his fine mind, determining, in spite of the opposition of the arch chancellor Cambacérès, to have the price of bread regulated at the will of local administrations.

The formation of the cohorts of the national guard was another cause of suffering and murmurs. It is scarcely credible, but nevertheless true, that Napoleon, who was so confident in his power as to provoke unnecessarily a fresh conflict with Europe, was nevertheless oppressed with a vague but constant presentiment of some great danger.

Under the influence of this feeling Napoleon considered that the reserves already existing between the Rhine and the Elbe, and in the interior of the empire were insufficient, and desired, therefore, to raise one hundred and twenty thousand men under the title of the National Guard.

Thus the last measure, the expediency of which, though not understood, was unhappily but too certain, and proved to what danger Napoleon had exposed his own and our existence, had induced a general discontent at Metz, Lille, Rennes, Toulouse, and several other chief cities of the empire. Actual riots broke out in almost every town. Even in Paris, the schoolboys, so commonly alive to warlike sentiments, now gave expression to the pacific dispositions of the

nation with all the energy proper to their age, giving vent to seditious cries against the recent levies in the public thoroughfares, and pursuing with violence the agents of the police, on whom they bestowed the detested sobriquet of *mouchards* (spies).

An additional affliction was the re-establishment in the departments of non-stationary regiments for the purpose of enforcing the rules of the conscription. The number of refractory conscripts lowered the year preceding from 60,000 to 20,000 had since risen in consequence of numerous appeals made during the latter period, to 40 or 50,000. It was Napoleon's purpose again to diminish the list, taking from it one twentieth of a thousand to recruit the ranks of the regiments of the islands. New vexation, new murmurs, new causes of irritation could not fail to be the result. The soldiers of the non-stationary corps took up their quarters, as has already been stated, in the families of the refractory recruits, compelling them to furnish lodging, food, and a tax of several francs a day, so that they were often reduced to extreme misery. There were departments where as much as sixty, eighty, or even a hundred francs had been thus extorted, and from the poorest households. Some prefects had protested, but most kept silence, and executed the law at all risks. If in France, where glory at least recompensed for such sufferings, they were resented with lively indignation, a baneful effect was their necessary consequence throughout the newly-incorporated lands, which could only view in them a means for the perpetuation of their slavery. At the Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, risings attended the conscription. In east Friesland the prefect who personally superintended the business of the levy was assaulted and put to flight. Prince Lebrun, governor of Holland, for interceding in behalf of the delinquents was exposed to a rude reprimand for his weakness. It was Napoleon's wish that some unfortunates might be slaughtered with *éclat* to serve as an example to those who should essay emulating them; a sad lesson, whence they learned by counterfeiting submission for the moment, to keep themselves ready for the attack when we should have all Europe on our hands.

In the Hanse Towns departments the aversion to the levies for the land and sea services was still stronger. Holland might find some advantage in its re-incorporation with the Empire. But there was no convenience to the towns of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubec, naturally the ports of Germany, in their forming part of France to which their interests were as alien as their sentiments. They were frightened, but not reduced, by the death of a needy captain who had con-



veyed some travellers to Heligoland. The city of Hamburg was placarded by night with satirical papers which the police had the greatest difficulty in tearing off. The population was unanimous in seconding, as has been related, deserters from our service. Not only Germans, Italians, and Spaniards, but even Frenchmen, treating them as friends from the time they left their ranks. They were sheltered by day, conveyed on their journey by night, transported in boats over rivers, and fed for nothing on their way home.

A partial mutiny arose in the ranks of the Hanse Towns' regiments composed of veteran soldiers in the service of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubec, officered in part by Frenchmen. Some companies employed to guard the remote coasts of the Baltic offered violence to their officers who remained loyal, and seizing some fishing smacks took refuge in Heligoland. It was found necessary to send the most disaffected of these three regiments, the 129th, inland, and surround it with troops of reliable fidelity, under the command of Marshal Davoust. The reports on the temper of the Dutch and Westphalian contingents were unsatisfactory, notwithstanding the unceasing care bestowed on the latter by King Jerome. An insurrection broke out at Brunswick, a populous city, from regret for its exiled duke, and several of our soldiers suffered severely. Jerome's intervention, for the purpose of softening measures against the guilty, was replied to by an order of the day issued by Napoleon, which intrusted the trial of every crime, perpetrated against the French army, to a camp-tribunal of none but French officers.

The state of public feeling was no better in the south than in the north of the empire. The refusal of all political liberty, and well nigh all national independence, a yoke less hated, certainly, than that of Austria, but with its own article of rigour, the conscription, incessant war, the deprivation of all commerce, and the contest with the church, at length embittered against France the Italians who had originally welcomed her with the greatest eagerness. It was true that Lombardy under the mild, regular, but equitable government of Prince Eugene, contrasted as it was with the harsh rule of the House of Austria, remained tranquil. True, too, that the sentiments of Piedmont (Genoa excepted, which sighed for the opening of the sea) were growing into accordance with those of France, and that there was a little more sympathy in that people for a warlike policy; but in Tuscany, with its aversion for war, its unbroken reminiscences of a native government, gentle, wise, and philosophical, of its claims as a birth-place of the sovereignty of intellect over southern Italy, and of the decided influence of the clergy; in Rome, where the populace

was inconsolable for the crushed Papacy, where the antipathy to the domination of Ultra-montanes was as vigorous as in Calabria, hatred was scarce dissembled, so that there, as in the rest of the Empire, one reverse could produce the burst of a general rising. To bring such about the presence of the smallest band of Englishmen would have been enough.

Such sentiments diffused over so many different countries were doubtless not reflected by the mirror of daily publicity, which by exaggerating the object forces those to survey it who would willingly blind themselves to its presence. Every one experienced the truth of the tales in his own person, but men's hatred was confirmed and their rage insensibly increased by the information conveyed in the assent of traders and travellers, that in this and that province the self-same outrages were endured. Napoleon had certainly a mind far too comprehensive not to discern this state of things; but so far was he from concluding that he should refrain from aggravating the peril by a new war, so far from reasoning as on his return from the campaign of Wagram, when he for a moment bent his thoughts to the pacification of Europe by the restoration of peace, that he inferred from all this the necessity of instant war with Russia, in hope of crushing at once in 1812 as in 1809 the discontents ready to burst forth into action.

In the meantime he could not fail to observe the general fear which was entertained of the approaching war, and he was irritated at the objections which were not addressed to him but which he divined, because he had been compelled to address them to himself, and he frequently answered these objections in conversation with persons who had not even thought of them, or who, if they had even thought of them, would not have dared to express them. The Archchancellor Cambacérès was the only man who ventured to attempt to dissuade his master from the impending enterprises, and to him Napoleon declared, as he had declared to all the world, that a conclusive struggle with Russia was absolutely necessary, and that as it was necessary the sooner it took place the better. With regard to the war itself Napoleon by no means underrated its gravity, and whilst he admitted that it would probably be of longer duration than those he had hitherto waged, declared that he had made suitable preparations for conducting it with safety.

After having insisted upon the difficulties of the war, Prince Cambacérès spoke of the general disposition of Germany, of the little reliance that could be placed on the good faith of the little German Princes, or of Austria, or on the ability of the King of Prussia to keep his engagements.

Napoleon, however, treated all those fears as chimerical, and declared that, even if well founded, they would all be guarded against by a powerful army encamped on the Elbe.

Napoleon now hastened to make such arrangements as would enable him to quit Paris at the first movement made by Russia. With the exception of the waggons which were somewhat behind hand, everything proceeded as well as he could wish, and he was able to reckon that before May, or June at the farthest, every preparation for his formidable struggle would have been completed. His finances were, at least for the moment, in a state to meet his immense expenses. His budget, which used to be systematically confined to seven hundred and forty or seven hundred and seventy millions, had suddenly risen to nine hundred and fifty millions; an augmentation partly due to the annexation of the Roman States, Illyria, Holland, and the Hanseatic departments. Holland however cost more than she brought on account of her debt, which absorbed thirty-one millions out of fifty-five millions of receipts.

In addition to this augmentation of a hundred millions, sixty millions had been added to the revenue by the famous tariff of the month of August, which permitted importation of colonial produce at a duty of fifty per cent. But although the budget reckoned thus a hundred millions more of receipts there still remained a deficit. The personnel and matériel of war which in 1810 had absorbed, the first two hundred and fifty millions, the second one hundred and fifty millions, altogether four hundred millions, had required about four hundred and eighty millions in 1811, and would soon need more than five hundred; whilst the navy, which had formerly cost one hundred and forty millions, had cost one hundred and seventy millions since the annexation of the navies of Holland and the Hanse Towns. And thus the new resources which had been obtained by the annexation had not only been absorbed by the expenses of military administration, but this annexation had even been a source of increased expense. But on the other hand the government sales of contraband goods, and confiscated property of the great Spanish families, had produced great receipts. The products of these various sources of revenue amounted to one hundred and fifty millions; of which sum Napoleon devoted ninety millions to the arrears due on account of former budgets, and there then remained at his disposal sixty millions, an addition to his *domaine extraordinaire* which, after deducting all dotations and sums expended on public works, still amounted to about three hundred and forty mil-

lions; but as a portion of this sum had been lent to the Treasury, and a still larger portion was due from Westphalia, Saxony, Bavaria, Prussia, and Austria, only one hundred and twenty-three millions of it were immediately available; and this sum, in addition to the sixty millions before mentioned, formed a reserve fund of one hundred and eighty millions. With such a reserve, therefore, and a budget which could afford to allow five hundred millions to the military service and one hundred and seventy to that of the navy, Napoleon believed that he was provided with funds sufficient for the regular payment of a force which amounted, without taking into account the national guards, to twelve hundred thousand men, of whom nine hundred thousand were French. We must remember, however, that the three hundred thousand troops in the Peninsula only cost the French treasury forty millions, the remainder of the expense attending their maintenance being defrayed by Spain; and that this was also the case with a certain number of troops in Illyria and Germany.

Amongst the most important of the affairs which Napoleon was anxious to arrange before the commencement of the war with Russia, was the compact he was ready to enter into with America against England. In spite of the success of Lord Wellington in Spain, the domestic affairs of England had latterly fallen into a still more disastrous state; her merchants and manufacturers were almost entirely ruined; her labouring classes were without work and without food; and the British cabinet was aggravating these evils by its extravagant conduct with respect to America, which was now almost the only great country which remained accessible to British commerce, and towards which, so far from treating it with caution and consideration, it behaved as Napoleon had behaved towards the states of the continent; its famous orders in council, which Napoleon had met with the no less famous decrees of Berlin and Milan, being the cause of a quarrel which was on the point of breaking out into open war.

America, as we have already seen, at first replied to these orders and decrees by interdicting, by the law of *embargo*, her vessels from touching at the European ports, and subsequently limited this prohibition to the coasts of France and England, at the same time declaring that it would be withdrawn with respect to that one of the two powers which should renounce its own rigorous system. Napoleon had, accordingly, withdrawn his decrees of Berlin and Milan as regarded America, which country had in return repealed the law of embargo with respect to France whilst she maintained



it with respect to England ; and it was on this subject that she was now engaged in a quarrel with the latter country.

England would have gained more than France by imitating Napoleon's conduct with respect to America ; but the spirit of maritime supremacy permitted her only to modify, very slightly, her orders in council instead of repealing them entirely. She had ceased to demand that American vessels should resort to the banks of the Thames for the purpose of paying her tribute, but declared the ports of the French Empire blockaded from the mouths of the Ems to the frontiers of Portugal, from Toulon to Orbitello, which was, in fact, a paper blockade ; America declared that the rights of neutrals were entirely opposed to this fictitious blockade, and that she would maintain her law of *non-intercourse* with respect to England although she had repealed it with respect to France ; and a last outrage committed by England rendered war between the two countries imminent. Under the pretext that many of her sailors, to avoid serving in her navy had emigrated to America, she boarded American vessels and seized all the sailors speaking English ; and, of course, as the two nations speak the same language she thus seized almost as many Americans as English subjects. The vessels of the former country frequently resisted this treatment, and thus the exasperation between the two countries reached its height, and war between them was regarded as inevitable.

In the meantime the English opposition had numerous and just causes of dissatisfaction with the cabinet ; and although the opposition doubtless exaggerated, as is usually the case, the errors of the government, it would but have expressed the truth had it declared, that it was to England's interest that commerce should be entirely free whilst it was to the advantage of Napoleon that it should be checked, and that by its unreasonable conduct in persisting in maintaining its orders in council it was preparing for its country the most calamitous of privations, in the loss of relations with America, and a war which could not but be infinitely dangerous should Napoleon obtain a new triumph in the plains of the north.

The grave question of Irish emancipation was another cause of violent division between the various English parties. Ireland was at this time in a worse state than any other part of the British dominions, and required the presence of troops which could have been much more usefully employed in Portugal. The opposition, inflexible on this point, maintained with passion that the only means of appeasing Ireland and setting free the troops by which it was held in check was to grant it an equality of rights with the other portions of

the United Kingdom. In the meantime the situation of parties in the English House of Commons was such that a single check experienced by the English armies, would have overthrown the war policy; and in spite of the advantages obtained by the enemy in Spain, and the reverses sustained by our troops, Napoleon might still, by leading his forces in this direction, instead of throwing them into the abyss of the north, have turned the policy of England towards peace.

Although Napoleon failed to see this state of things in its true light, he comprehended that, as the English were alienating the Americans by every species of vexatious conduct, it was necessary to draw them into his interest, by an entirely opposite mode of treatment. The great difficulty was, how to be able to grant the commercial favours required by America without at the same time relaxing the continental blockade. Nevertheless, having to a certain extent relaxed with respect to them the restrictions of which the Americans complained, and despatched M. Serurier to Philadelphia to promise them the most free admission into France should they definitively break with England, he flattered himself, and the event proved that he was right, that in less than a month he would have formed an alliance with America against England.

Napoleon's diplomatic efforts with regard to the approaching war were not confined to this direction. Although excessively irritated against Sweden, he nevertheless, as the crisis of affairs approached, listened to certain hints which probably came from Stockholm, through Bernadotte's wife, the sister of the Queen of Spain, who was much distressed at the idea of a rupture between France and Spain, and, up to this moment, had been unwilling to quit Paris. These hints were to the effect that the existing misunderstanding had been caused by M. Alquier's want of address, that the Prince Royal was only anxious for an honourable opportunity for entering into an alliance with France, that his connivance in the contraband traffic was only caused by the bad state of the Swedish finances, which this traffic increased; and that if France would subsidize Sweden, she would close her ports against the English, and provide her with an army to be used against Russia. Napoleon very much doubted the sincerity of these offers, but as it was quite possible that Bernadotte whose advances had been very coldly received, as was known at Paris, by England and Russia, might be really returning to his allegiance to France, it was necessary that such an ally should not be altogether rejected; for the march of a Swedish army upon Finland, whilst a French army should advance upon Lithuania would be a very use-

ful diversion ; and an agent, named by the Princess Royal, was accordingly authorised to convey to Stockholm the views and requirements of the French court.

In the meantime the month of March was drawing to a conclusion, and everything was succeeding according to Napoleon's wishes. One of Davoust's divisions, that of General Friant, had entered Swedish Pomerania, and after having put a stop to what remained of the contraband traffic, had advanced to Stettin on the Oder. The division Gudin had advanced farther and taken up a position at Stargard, having in front of it the cavalry of General Bruyère on the Dantzic route. Dessaix's division was posted at Custrin on the Oder, having its light cavalry at Landsberg in the direction of Thorn ; whilst Marshal Davoust himself, with the divisions Morand and Compans, and the cuirassiers attached to his corps, had approached the Oder and was ready to cross it at the first signal. Marshal Oudinot's troops, after having assembled at Munster, had *écheloned* on the Berlin route ; and Marshal Ney had advanced from Mayence to Erfurt, and from Erfurt to Targan on the Elbe. The Saxons had passed the Oder ; the Viceroy of Italy, after having crossed the Alps with his army had traversed Bavaria, rallied the Bavarian troops, and advanced almost as far as the Oder. During these various movements the officers had kept their troops, in conformity with the orders they had received, under as strict discipline as was possible, but, unfortunately, excesses very much to be regretted, were committed by the corps of Marshal Ney and Prince Eugene, which recompensed themselves for some privations they had had to endure at the expense of the countries traversed.

Up to this period no rumour had announced that this vast display of force had provoked the Russians to take the initiative ; and consequently Napoleon, in conformity with his plan, ordered a fresh movement to be made by his troops at the commencement of April, from the Oder to the Vistula, intending to halt them on the latter river, that the columns might be rallied, the baggage brought up, and the vegetation sufficiently advanced to provide for the cattle during their progress. At the same time in order that hostilities might be delayed until this required advance in vegetation had taken place, he sent another despatch to M. de Lauriston, informing him of this second movement made by the troops, and dictating to him the language he was to hold on the occasion. By this despatch M. de Lauriston was ordered to say, that the Emperor of the French having been informed of the march of the Russian armies towards the Dwina and the Dnieper (which was entirely untrue), he had determined



to take up a position on the Vistula, since he feared an invasion of the grand duchy, but that he was always ready to treat with the Emperor Alexander, or even to hold a personal interview with him between the Vistula and the Niemen, in order that all differences might be settled in an amicable conference such as that of Tilsit or Erfurt.

In the meantime, the greatest resentment at these proceedings was felt at St. Petersburg, and the presence of M. de Czernicheff, who had arrived there on the 10th of March with an amicable letter from Napoleon, but with personal impressions of an entirely opposite character, had not tended to diminish the effect of the news which arrived from every part of the continent. The news of the two treaties entered into by Napoleon with Prussia and Austria, especially revealed to the Emperor Alexander and his minister, M. de Romanzoff, the imminence of the approaching danger ; for as Alexander knew that Napoleon had delayed entering into the former treaty from the fear of giving too much umbrage to Russia, he could only conclude from its having been now signed that Napoleon had determined upon decided action, and no longer cared for dissimulation. Prussia had sent M. de Knesbeck to St. Petersburg to explain to the Emperor Alexander the sad necessity she found herself under of taking part with France in the war against Russia ; and M. de Knesbeck, either authorised by the King or carried along by national feeling, had permitted himself to declare that the King of Prussia was in his heart devoted to Russia, and that there could be no doubt he should be speedily able to ally himself with Alexander, should the latter pursue a wise course of conduct ; and with respect to this latter point M. de Knesbeck gave the wise advice, which was so injurious to us, that the Russian forces should retreat before the French, enticing them into the interior of Russia, and then attack them when they should be exhausted by hunger and fatigue ; promising that should this plan be adopted the whole of Germany would ally itself with Russia, in order to effect the downfall of the audacious invader who during twelve years had devastated Europe.

Alexander received with haughty indulgence the explanations of Frederick William, whilst he was sedulously attentive to the wise councils of his envoy. He was less indulgent, however, towards the Austrian Ambassador, M. de Saint Julien, who denied the existence of the treaty between his country and Napoleon, and did so in good faith, since his court, that it might the more surely deceive Alexander, had left him in ignorance on the subject. At length in one of his interviews with M. de Saint Julien, when



the Austrian minister was endeavouring as usual to call in doubt the very existence of a treaty between his country and Napoleon, Alexander produced a copy of the treaty itself, at the same time expressing his extreme astonishment at this conduct on the part of Austria, which he regarded as an abandonment of the cause of Europe, and declaring that, as he could not defend Europe alone, he would follow the general example and treat with Napoleon, since the remoteness of his country would always enable him to maintain his independence, whilst those who had abandoned him would remain slaves. M. de Saint Julien, who was a member of the vast aristocratic coterie which overspread the continent, and was inspired with a feeling of profound hatred against France, was too surprised and confused to offer any excuse save the allegation of his ignorance on the subject, and could only promise that in a few days he would be able to offer satisfactory explanations respecting it.

Although Alexander could now no longer doubt that war was inevitable, he was resolved to abstain from destroying any last chance of peace which might yet remain by taking the initiative, and scrupulously to refrain even from touching with his advanced posts the territories of Napoleon's allies. He further resolved even to await, before quitting St. Petersburg, some act more formally aggressive than the march of the French troops upon the Vistula, and in the meantime held last interviews with M. de Lauriston, in the course of which he shed tears as he spoke of the impending war, and Napoleon's injustice in attempting to renounce all commerce with neutrals. M. de Lauriston was excessively urgent that, even if M. de Nesselrode were not sent, some one should be sent with a reply to the communications and letter sent by Napoleon through M. de Czernicheff, and although Alexander declared such a step was evidently useless, he nevertheless wrote a letter to Napoleon in answer to the one carried to St. Petersburg by M. de Czernicheff, in which he declared that he had at all times been anxious to bring his disputes with Napoleon to an amicable termination, and that the world would one day acknowledge what he had done towards this end; that he had sent to Prince Kourakin powers to negotiate, and that this Ambassador had always been in possession of them, and that he was ardently desirous that on the new bases thus set forth a pacific arrangement might be attained. M. de Serdobin was the bearer of these last conditions, and by them Alexander declared himself ready to accept any compensation for Oldenburg that might be offered him; to make such changes in the ukase of December 1810, of which French industry complained, as might be compatible with

the interests of Russia; and to examine even if Napoleon's own commercial system could not be adopted in Russia—on condition that the absolute exclusion of neutrals, especially Americans, should not be demanded, and that the French troops should evacuate old Prussia, the Duchy of Warsaw and Swedish Pomerania.

The Russian court had refrained as yet from entering into any engagement with England, in conformity with her plan of avoiding any step which might render war inevitable. Indirect communications, however, had been opened in the Swedish court which prepared the way for the immediate formation of an alliance between the two countries as soon as circumstances should have rendered reserve unnecessary; and this moment having arrived, or nearly arrived, when Napoleon had not hesitated to conclude his alliance with Prussia and Austria, Alexander sent M. de Suchtelen to confer with Mr. Thornton, the agent sent thither, by the English government, not only respecting the conditions of peace with England, but also of an alliance, offensive and defensive, with a view to the maintenance of war à outrance with France.

In the meantime, as Bernadotte became urgent for an answer to his proposition to the Russian court, and as, although it distrusted very much the character of the new Prince Royal, his true relations with France were shown by the occupation of Swedish Pomerania by the troops of Marshal Davoust, on the 5th of April (the 24th of March with the Russians), Alexander concluded a treaty with the court of Stockholm, which conceded to it the object of its most ardent wishes, namely, Norway, and guaranteed to the two states their actual possessions, which was, in fact, a surrender by Sweden of the possession of Finland to Russia. For the realisation of the views set forth in this treaty it was agreed that Sweden should assemble an army of thirty thousand men and that Russia should lend her one of twenty thousand; that with these fifty thousand men the Prince Royal was first to seize Norway, and that when this operation, which it was supposed would be an easy one, should have been accomplished, he should descend upon some point in Germany and take the French army in the rear. It was not expressed, but it was understood that Britain was to assist in this diversion with both subsidies and troops. In the meantime Denmark was to be informed of the manner in which she was to be despoiled, and offered a recompense in Germany, not distinctly pointed out, but such as the future war could not fail to procure for her; if Denmark did not consent to these terms war was immediately to be declared against

her ; and that as there could not but be considerable doubt respecting the manner in which such a treaty would be regarded, not only by Europe but even by Sweden herself, it was agreed that the Swedish cabinet should commence by declaring her neutrality with regard to the belligerent powers, and from this state of neutrality should pass to a state of war against France.

The most important question which Alexander had to consider was that respecting peace with the Turks. The certainty of war between France and Russia had induced the Turks to resist any concessions to Russia, whilst they persisted in refusing to become our allies, for they could not forget their resentment at the manner in which they had been treated at Tilsit, although the new course of policy adopted by France had been of a kind to recompense them. In the meantime, as nothing could be more disadvantageous to Russia than the continuance of war with Turkey, and as it was very probable that a hundred thousand men withdrawn from the Danube on the Vistula, and carried against the flank of the French, would be sufficient to change the destiny of the war, Alexander determined to send Admiral Tchitchakoff on a mission to the East ; and giving him the immediate command of the army of the Danube, and the eventual command of the army of General Tormosoff, actually in Volhynia, directed him to make either peace or war, resigning a few of the demands hitherto made by Russia, demanding, for example, Bessarabia alone, and taking the Pruth as a frontier instead of the Sereth ; and should they not yield to these conditions to snatch from them by energetic warfare what they refused to peaceful negotiation.

In the meantime the news which continued to arrive increased the anxiety felt at St. Petersburg to the highest pitch, when there suddenly arrived an employé of the Russian legation sent by Prince Kourakin with the information that one of the servants of the Russian embassy had been arrested in Paris on a charge of tampering with the persons employed in the French government offices, and had been refused to Prince Kourakin, who had demanded his surrender in the name of diplomatic privileges. But a still graver piece of information brought by M. Divoff was to the effect that he had fallen in with the troops of Marshal Davoust beyond the Elbing. All parties in St. Petersburg declared that Alexander could no longer delay to repair to his head quarters. Alexander had not time to see M. de Lauriston before his departure, but he sent his assurances of his esteem, and declarations that he, Alexander, did not quit his capital to commence the war, but, if possible, to delay it, affirming

once more that he would be ready at his head quarters to negotiate a peace on the most equitable and moderate bases.

On the 21st of April, having first performed his devotions in public in the church of Cazan, Alexander set out on his road accompanied by the chief persons of his government and his court, and proceeded towards Wilna. At the moment of his departure he received a satisfactory communication from Austria, declaring that if Russia would take no proceedings against her territory, she need fear nothing from the 30,000 Austrian troops. In the meantime M. de Lauriston awaited at St. Petersburg orders from his court for his departure, for he did not wish, by demanding his passports, to add a new war signal to all those which had already been given in spite of all his exertions to the contrary.

Napoleon awaited the moment when Alexander should quit St. Petersburg, to depart from Paris, and in anticipation of this moment had ordered a third movement of his troops, by which they would be advanced upon the Vistula, where he intended that they should pass the month of May. He ordered Marshal Davoust to concentrate his troops between Marienwerder, Marienberg, and Elbing, the Prussians being always in advance as far as the Niemen; Marshal Oudinot to take up a position at Dantzic, so far as to form the left of Marshal Davoust's position; Ney to establish himself at Thorn, so as to form the right; whilst Prince Eugene was to advance to Plock on the Vistula with the Bavarians and Italians, King Jerome to assemble at Warsaw the Poles, Saxons, and Westphalians, the guard to take up a position at Posen, and the Austrians to debouch from Galicia to Valencia. In this new position the army would occupy the line of the Vistula from Bohemia to the Baltic, and present a formidable mass of five hundred thousand men, without taking into account the reserves.

In the meantime, in his anxiety to avoid actual hostilities until the month of June, Napoleon had recourse to fresh subterfuges, by this means causing a delay which was to be one of the principal causes of the misfortunes of the approaching campaign. He had resolved, therefore, to send a new envoy to Alexander, who should repeat to him all that M. de Lauriston had already said in new words and under another form, and for this purpose selected M. de Narbonne, who had entered his service in 1809, as governor of Raab, and directed him to repair to Alexander's head quarters as the bearer of Napoleon's compliments, and whilst avoiding all dissensions foreign to his mission, to express a desire and even a hope that an armed negotiation between the two sovereigns on the Niemen, would not only put an end to the war



but bring about a renewal of the alliance between them. M. de Narbonne was to declare the object of his mission to be to repair the errors of the French Generals, whose impatience or want of thought had permitted them to indulge in aggressive acts without the orders of their government; whilst he had to declare, should Russian troops have advanced at all beyond their own territories, that such an advance was a very excusable military precaution; and he was directed by those methods to amuse Alexander for twenty or thirty days with the idea that a negotiation would put a stop to the war. At the same time Napoleon informed M. de Narbonne of the true purposes of his mission, and directed him to make the most accurate possible observations of all that might come under his notice at the Russian head quarters.

These last precautions having been taken Napoleon prepared to set out; proposing to proceed first to Dresden, and to remain there during two or three weeks for the purpose of holding a court, which should present to the world such a display of power as it had not seen since the days of Charlemagne, Cæsar, and Alexander.

At the moment of his departure, he determined, in spite of the remonstrances of the Prince Arch-chancellor, on a violent measure, which placed his government on a level with the revolutionary governments which had preceded it. This measure was a tax on corn. The dearth had continued, the price of corn had risen to sixty or seventy francs the hectolitre, a price which would be exorbitant now but which was much more so then, and the populace mingled with its cries of famine, passionate accusations against the farmers and corn dealers, and Napoleon, unable to resist his desire of putting a violent check to the excessive dearness, and believing that he could deal with commerce as he dealt with Europe, published various decrees in the beginning of May, by which the prefects were not only empowered to draw up tariffs for the sale of wheat according to local circumstances, but also to compel those in whose hands it was to bring it to market.

On the 9th of May, after having confided his personal power to the Arch-chancellor Cambacérès and recommended him to use it, not faithfully, for he could not doubt his fidelity, but energetically, of which there was much greater doubt, and after having left as a protection for his wife, his child, and the centre of Europe, some hundreds of old soldiers of the imperial guard who were incapable of any active services, and after having repeatedly declared to all with whom he conversed that he hazarded nothing by this distant war, which he intended to conduct with great care and

to conclude in two campaigns, he set out for Dresden with the Empress, from the midst, not of the affection of his people, but of the admiration, fear, and submission.

Having arrived at Mayence on the 11th he employed the 12th in visiting the fortifications, in giving orders, and the commencement of that reception of sovereigns in which most of the princes of the continent were successively to take part. On the 13th the imperial court passed the Rhine, stopped for a moment at Aschaffenberg, with the prince primate, and on the following day met the King of Wurtemberg, who, a proud sovereign of a little state, paid Napoleon the compliment of meeting him on his way, but not the flattery of accompanying him to Dresden. The imperial court passed the night at Wurzburg, with the Grand Duke of Wurzburg, uncle of the Empress, slept at Bareuth on the following night, and on the 15th at Plauen, traversing Germany through the midst of unheard of crowds with whom curiosity counterbalanced hate; and the emotions of whose curiosity in fact expressed themselves in a manner which almost resembled the expressions of affection and joy,

On the morning of the 16th the good sovereigns of Saxony met the imperial court at Fryburg, and in the evening accompanied it on its entrance into their capital,

On the following day, the 17th, Napoleon held a levy, in the course of which he displayed himself courteous but haughty, and appeared much more intoxicated with his power than he really was, for certain glimmerings of the truth had not failed to cross his spirit. But his doubts were short, and scarcely interrupted his confidence in his unvarying success, in the extent of his forces, and the consciousness of his genius.

Napoleon expected to meet at Dresden the Emperor and Empress of Austria, the latter of the House of Modena, haughty and disdainful of the recent grandeur of her son-in-law, the former delighted to witness the state of a daughter whom he loved, though ashamed of the degradation of his nation. He was of that order of mind which excuses treason on the ground of necessity, and escapes from remorse in thoughtlessness. While his word was pledged to Alexander he listened to the overtures of his rival, desirous of securing himself in either event from risk. His family pride had been flattered by an Italian antiquarian who demonstrated the princely rank of the Bonapartes of Treviso in the middle ages; and which, as well as his own reverses, veiled for the time the affections of his Empress, who was conciliated by the presents and sedulous courtesy and even filial dutifulness of Napoleon.

It was on the first day alone that the King of Saxony entertained the allied sovereigns. Afterwards, although in his own capital, he appeared the guest of the Emperor, for whom a movable palace had been forwarded from Paris. Dresden overflowed with princes and ministers jostling each other to catch sight of or exchange a word with him whose present grandeur sometimes appeared but the antecedent of a tragic catastrophe, and the consequent enfranchisement of Europe, sometimes the offspring of a constant good fortune and the pledge of success against infatuated Russia. But such flattery, however it might inflate the Duke of Bassano, fell unheeded on the satiated ears of the Emperor, who by night devised employment for the thousand courtiers who attended his progress. One matter demanding his attention was the discontent of Germany at the burden which the march of the French army imposed.

Prussia's contract for the supply of the troops had been frustrated by Napoleon's reluctance to discover the line of march. Thus Ney's and Eugene's soldiers, many of them from Wurtemberg and Bavaria, and therefore the more careless of outrages, the blame of which France must bear, had given occasion for loud murmurs. The additional subject of dissatisfaction with Prussia was the occupation of Spandau and Pillau, the key of the cape of Frische-haff, under pretence of providing a guard for the war matériel, for which, in accordance with the treaty, these forts served as the dépôt. The King was resolved, spite of the feeling of humiliation which made him dread the festivities of Dresden, to have an interview with the Emperor on these topics, and sent a favorite to the latter, and therefore a living proof of the folly of haste in matters of life and death (for Napoleon had once condemned him to be shot), M. de Hatzfeld, to confer on the matter. This nobleman was well received, but Frederick-William was too important a monument of the glory of France, and therefore his presence was commanded. Other grave themes of discussion were, firstly, the reply of the English government to the last offer of France intimating an acquiescence in the general changes of the map of Europe, on the terms of restitution of Sicily to the House of Bourbon, Portugal to that of Braganza, and of Spain to Ferdinand VII., with whose cause London had identified itself, proposals which, though made with diplomatic courtesy, an incredulity as to the sincerity of France's desire for peace neutralised; and, secondly, a much more serious matter, the demand of his passport by Prince Kourakin, in consequence, as was afterwards discovered, of the detention of a servant supposed to be implicated in a conspiracy, and the refusal to negotiate

on the basis of a retreat to the Oder, as proposed by M. de Serdobin. The Prince was dissuaded from persisting in his intention by the Duke of Bassano, but Napoleon, fearful of being forced to move before June, when vegetation should be far advanced, and the troops sufficiently rested, instructed M. de Lauriston to demand permission to follow Alexander from St. Petersburg, where, though treated with politeness, he could hear nothing of importance, to Wilna. When there he was to remonstrate on the menacing act of Prince Kourakin, and M. de Serdobin's proposition for the evacuation of old Prussia before the conclusion of a treaty (though untruly so represented), terms more insolent than any offered by Napoleon, even after the rout of Austerlitz and Friedland. Should M. de Lauriston fail (an extreme case) in obtaining leave he must demand his passport, though even the transmission of messages to and fro should occupy from five to twenty days. In the other case, besides the gain of time, there would be the advantage of having M. de Lauriston's personal report as to the warlike preparations at Wilna, and even the information collected by acute couriers while passing by the advanced posts.

Napoleon's attention was engaged, too, by vain hopes held out by Sweden of a diversion on the flank, for the treaty of the 5th of April was secret, and the readiness to receive Norway in lieu of Finland was unknown to him, as also by the promise of Turkey which, while resolute against any treaty with Russia which should involve the resignation of Moldavia and Wallachia, was reluctant to give up even Bessarabia, in the event of France commencing hostilities at once. General Audrossy was despatched to Constantinople to assure the Sultan.

The important subject of Poland still remained to be decided. In the meantime, all the world expected to behold its reconstitution, and believed that this was the motive which had induced Napoleon to engage in the impending war. How, in fact, could he make use of those provinces which a fortunate war might give into his hands, if he were not to devote them to this noble purpose? Moreover, Napoleon himself, when on the point of engaging in a new war with Russia, had admitted that one of the natural consequences of that war would be the restoration of Poland. But unfortunately his good sense, which in the midst of his rash enterprise pursued him as a kind of remorse, prohibited him to indulge in hopes of the success of such a measure of reparation as this. In his first campaign of 1807, he had found considerable enthusiasm in Posen, Cracow, Warsaw, and some other large towns, but he had nowhere observed that universal and irre-



sistable vehemence which could have rendered practicable a national reconstitution. And matters in this respect had not sensibly changed in 1812. The high noblesse was divided, the lesser was ruined, and the people engaged in the painful struggle with adversity. Moreover, the continental blockade, the might of which had fallen with peculiar severity upon Poland, had little tended to attach its people to France, and had entirely alienated the Jews, whose commercial resources rendered them important persons in cases of war. The fervour of Polish sentiment was, indeed, almost entirely confined to the army,—of which one portion had fought with us in Italy, Germany, and Spain, whilst the other, formed under Prince Poniatowski, but in our school, had distinguished itself in 1809 in the defence of the grand Duchy,—to the large and patriotic city of Warsaw, and to the other cities of the grand Duchy, whose enthusiasm it was easy to excite. All that Napoleon could hope to effect, therefore, was a large development of the Polish army; to increase it to one hundred and fifty thousand or two hundred thousand men, and by means of its army to raise Poland once more to the rank of nations. But, unhappily, he could spare neither the time nor the resources for the execution of such a plan.

In the meantime Napoleon determined to spare no efforts to excite in Poland that patriotic emotion by means of which he hoped to obtain both men and money, and with this object resolved to send some considerable person to Warsaw with the title of ambassador, which would be equivalent to a declaration that he regarded the grand duchy of Warsaw as a new state, not simply an appanage of Savoy but an independent existence, and capable of resuming the position of the ancient kingdom of Poland. This personage was to urge the Poles to confederate, to rise en masse, to form a general diet, and to double and triple the army of Prince Poniatowski. For this difficult mission Napoleon selected M. de Tallyrand, and the selection was a good one, for in addition to great personal qualities, which rendered him peculiarly fitted for such a mission he was at this moment the confidant even to infidelity of the court of Vienna, and he would, therefore, be able to cause less disquiet than any other, to this court, in the pursuit of his delicate mission. But on this very side the project failed, for with an impatience little worthy of him he was guilty of such imprudences on the subject at the court of Vienna that Napoleon experienced new distrust with respect to him, and having arrived at Dresden seeking some one whom he might send to Warsaw in his place, his choice fell upon the Archbishop of Malines, M. de

Pradt, and it would have been difficult to have chosen a man who had more spirit and less prudence.

Having summoned M. de Pradt and announced to him his appointment to the mission—we are about to attempt, he said, to render Russia less powerful, less ambitious, less proud, without, however, having any intention to destroy her—With such intentions, he continued, the reconstitution of Poland was an object evidently desirable, but that in every case it was necessary that Poland should pour out her own blood, since France could not revivify her supply by shedding her own. At the same time he pointed out the necessity of behaving with much prudence with respect to Austria. The archbishop set out, at once terrified and proud of the task set before him, for he was ambitious of being in his own age one of those great politicians of whom the church had furnished such remarkable specimens in times gone by.

The orders he had received to behave cautiously with respect to Austria, whilst at the same time striving to excite the national sentiments of the Poles were very appropriate to the difficulties of the moment. She had been so ill treated in the course of the territorial arrangements of the age, especially when Napoleon had directed them, that she had no wish to be dragged into any further discussions with him respecting territory, and her language with reference to the compensation she might receive from Poland was so vague, cold, and evasive, that Napoleon, perceiving that her troops would soon be on his flank and in his rear temporised with her whilst he awaited the advent of the divinity from whom he was in the habit of expecting the accomplishment of all his wishes—Victory.

Napoleon having devoted three days to these various affairs now prepared to depart, when the King of Prussia arrived at Dresden to complete the circle of crowned courtiers. He arrived on the 26th of May, and was received with the respect due to his character, which was respectable, although false, in obedience to stern necessity, and to his rank, which was still very elevated amongst sovereigns notwithstanding the misfortunes of his country. Napoleon conversed with him with much openness respecting his projects, and took pains to convince him and M. de Hardenberg that he had no designs against the Prussian territories. He excused the excesses committed by the French troops on their march, promised that all the damage they caused should be paid for, and moreover, that Prussia should receive a large territorial compensation should the war have a prosperous issue. He had persuaded Frederick William, who had resolved to retire into Silesia during the war, not to quit his royal residence,

that he might thus display a confidence in his royal ally, which would have a good effect on the minds of the populations; and when the latter presented his son to the Emperor, and offered him to him as one of his aides-de-camp, he appeared less sad than usual, although he was treated with less consideration in the midst of this wondrous assemblage of princes, than he deserved.

The month of May having now nearly reached its end the season for active operations drew nigh. Moreover, M. de Narbonne had arrived from Wilna, after having fulfilled the mission with which he had been charged to the Emperor Alexander, and he brought word that although Alexander was distressed at the idea of war he was resolved to maintain a desperate struggle, and to withdraw into the depths of his empire rather than conclude a peace which would enslave him, as the other monarchs of Europe had already been enslaved. At the same time he affirmed that Alexander was equally determined not to take the initiative in hostilities; and this was the only information brought by M. de Narbonne which interested Napoleon, for it permitted him to feel entire security in the peaceful achievement of his preparatory movements.

Since it would be necessary, in accordance with the plans he had laid down, to carry his arms from the Vistula to the Niemen between the 1st and 15th of June, Napoleon determined to quit Dresden on the 29th of May, to proceed by Posen, Thorn, Dantzic, and Königsberg, to the Niemen; and after having overwhelmed his father-in-law and mother-in-law with filial attentions, displayed the utmost testimonies of respect towards the King of Prussia, shown the most cordial friendship towards his host the King of Saxony, and behaved towards his Royal visitors with lofty but gracious politeness, he embraced the Empress with emotion and left her more afflicted than might have been supposed probable in the case of a wife who had been selected for reasons of policy. These adieux having been completed, on the 29th of May Napoleon, accompanied by MM. de Coulaincourt, Berthier, and Duroc, left Dresden for Posen, at the same time having the report opened that he was proceeding to Warsaw, although this was far from his intentions, since he was unwilling to contract personal relations with the Poles before he knew what he could obtain from them; but he was desirous of inspiring them with indefinite hopes, and of persuading the enemy that his first efforts would be in the direction of Volhynia, when, in fact, they would be in a completely opposite quarter.

On his route he found traces of the excesses committed by his

troops, and at Thorn was himself much disgusted at the manner in which the Wurtemberg and Bavarian troops had pillaged and mercilessly devastated the Duchy of Posen, he addressed severe reproaches to Marshal Ney, Prince Eugene, and the hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg, who commanded them. There was, however, some excuse for these commanders in the difficulty there had been to provide for their troops during the forced marches they had had to make; difficulties which were much increased by the numerous artillery which accompanied them, and the enormous size of the waggons which conveyed their provisions. Already many of the illusions which had inspired Napoleon with the hope of being able to overcome the great difficulty presented by the extent of country before him began to dissolve; and an immense quantity of baggage waggons choked up the roads of Germany, and covered them with the carcases of horses which had been forced too young into a too laborious service.

The city of Thorn, when Napoleon arrived on the 2nd of June, presented a scene of extraordinary tumult, for besides the youth of both the old and the new noblesse who were there, with sumptuous appointments, ready to take part in this campaign as though it were a simple march of triumph, there were now in this city the staffs of the Emperor, of the Major General Berthier, that of King Murat, of Prince Eugene, of King Jerome, and of Marshals Davoust, Ney, Oudinot, &c. In addition to the tumult caused by the presence of men, horses, and equipages, was the confusion which naturally arose from the presence of the natives of all countries, speaking French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, in a city of which the inhabitants only spoke Polish. Napoleon was irritated by this uproar, and alarmed at the embarrassment which he foresaw might be occasioned by the elaborate preparations of the staffs for their own comfort; he made various regulations, therefore, with respect to the baggage which might be taken by each; and having compelled the dismissal of a number of diplomatists whom the monarchs, his allies, had intended to send in the train of the grand army for the purpose of furnishing them with information respecting its movements, Napoleon employed himself in reducing the transport service of the army to the limits required by absolute necessity.

Napoleon determined that the general movement of the army from the Vistula to the Niemen should take place on the 6th of June. King Jerome forming the right, was to advance with the Saxons under Reynier, the Poles under Poniatowski, and the Westphalians under his own direct command. by Pultusk, Ostrolenka, and Goniondz, to Grodno.



The Viceroy Eugene, forming the centre with the Bavarians under St Cyr, and the army of Italy under his immediate orders, was to leave Soldau on the 6th and, traversing the saddest provinces of Poland, approach the Niemen in the environs of Prenn. Marshals Oudinot, Ney, Davoust, and the guard, composing the left and great body of the army, were to proceed by the roads of old Prussia parallel to each other, so as not to be a mutual hindrance, and to follow the course of the Niemen from Tilsit to Kowno; Ney passing by Osterode, Schippenbeil, Gerdaun: Oudinot by Marienwerder, Liebstadt, Eylau, Vehlau; Davoust by Elbing, Braunsberg, Tapisu. The guard and the *parks* were to remain in the rear, so as not to be a cause of obstruction. Napoleon calculated that on the 15th or 16th of June all his troops would be in a line along the Niemen, and that after three or four days repose they would be able to enter upon active operations.

The Emperor himself proceeded by Marienberg to Dantzic where many things required his personal care, and where he was to meet his Lieutenants, Davoust and Murat, whom he had not seen for two years. It was at Marienberg he met Marshal Davoust at the moment when he was about to depart to Königsberg to place himself at the head of the movement of the army, and the reception he received at the hands of the Emperor was not in conformity with the confidence Napoleon had always had in his great talents and solid character. In fact, whilst Marshal Davoust had performed services which exceeded any of the same kind ever known, in accordance with the orders of Napoleon, he had modified these orders as circumstances rendered necessary, without fear of the misconstruction which might be put on such conduct by jealousy; and Major General Berthier, who was his secret and dangerous enemy, because he, Berthier, had been accused in 1809 of having compromised the army whilst Marshal Davoust was considered to have saved it, had taken pains to make Napoleon acquainted with the least resistance offered by Marshal Davoust to the imperial orders. By an unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, the Poles, being in quest of a King for their kingdom when it should be reconstituted, had turned their attention towards the Prince of Echemühl, and had expressed their wishes on this point in the salons of Warsaw until they had reached the Tuileries, and excessively displeased Napoleon, who was little satisfied at the attempt at royalty made in Portugal, and made and realised in Sweden. Marshal Davoust knew nothing and would have cared little for the intended honours, for he was one of the few of Napoleon's companions in arms who had not grown enervated at the sumptuous banquet of Fortune.

But Napoleon, failing to enquire into the truth of this fact, finding everywhere along the banks of the Vistula the traces of the most profound veneration for Marshal Davoust, and his name in every mouth, became, not so much jealous as annoyed at a greatness which he had himself created, and received his Marshal with a coldness of which the latter took no account, being habituated to Napoleon's brusqueries, and attributing their increased frequency to an irritability which increased with age, fatigue, and cares. But the period of his favour with his master had entirely passed away.

On the 7th of June, Napoleon arrived at Dantzic, where he met another of his Lieutenants, Murat, who had been less fortunate in becoming a king than Davoust in remaining a lieutenant, and who, while he was the most brilliant and daring of soldiers, was quite capable of being led into infidelity, by vanity, ambition, and evil council, and had inspired Napoleon with considerable distrust; and the latter, that he might have at his disposal the best cavalry officer of the age, and at the same time be able to keep constant watch over a very fickle man, had summoned Murat to the army. When they met at Dantzic Murat was fatigued and sick at the time, and Napoleon remarking his paleness and the absence of his ordinary looks, demanded roughly what was the matter, and whether he were not content with being a king. "But sire," replied Murat, "I scarcely am a king"—"I have not made you and your brothers kings," bitterly replied Napoleon, "that you should reign in your fashion but in mine, following my policy and remaining Frenchmen on foreign thrones."

Napoleon passed several days at Dantzic in inspecting the fortifications of a place which was to play an important part in the impending war; in visiting the magazines and bridges of the Vistula, and rectifying and completing all that had been done with the most unequalled skill. From Dantzic he proceeded to Elbing, and from Elbing to Königsberg, where he arrived on the 12th of June, with the purpose of inspecting the means of interior navigation, by which were to be conveyed his vast magazines from the dépôt of Dantzic to the heart of the Russian provinces. Colonel Baste, a distinguished officer, who was as intrepid by land as by sea, was entrusted with the direction of this navigation, which commencing at Dantzic, passing by the Vistula, Frische-haff, the Pregel, the Deime, the Curische-haff, the Niemen, and the Wilia, ended at Wilna itself. To this officer, moreover, had been entrusted the defence of the Frische-haff and the Curische-haff, being entrusted for this purpose with two battalions of the imperial guard, which were to occupy these vast lagunes with gun boats strongly armed.

At Dantzic were the depôts of the guard and of the troops of Marshal Davoust, and these were able to furnish independently of the troops left in the works, a division *mobile* of eight thousand men at Dantzic, and of six thousand at Königsberg, which communicating by means of cavalry, would always be able to unite against an unexpected attack. Napoleon, having seen with his own eyes the execution of his orders, directed the immediate departure of a first convoy, comprising provisions and the whole matériel of six pontoon bridges. A second convoy was to consist of an equal quantity of provisions and the munitions of the artillery; whilst the following were to carry provisions and clothing and the siege train intended to be employed against Riga.

Whilst these convoys proceeded towards the Pregel and the Niemen, Napoleon devoted his attention to the hospitals, and organised sufficient for the reception of twenty thousand patients between Königsberg, Brämsberg, and Elbing, and having employed the first half of June in these various works he resolved to enter upon the actual commencement of this formidable campaign; and devoted a few moments on the banks of the Niemen to certain necessary preliminary formalities.

On the day following that on which Napoleon had departed for Dresden, M. Signeul had arrived there from Stockholm with a secret message from the Prince Royal, in answer to the overtures made through the Princess Royal. At the same time that the official communication was made by accredited Swedish ministers announcing in cold and haughty terms the intention of Sweden to remain neutral between the belligerent powers, and offering, which was simply ridiculous, the mediation of Sweden between the contending powers. In the secret communication Bernadotte, who was as faithless to his new ally as to his native country, declared that Sweden could well resign Finland, the possession of which would but involve her in a perpetual war with Russia, and that the recompense she hoped to obtain for the loss of it was Norway, which nature evidently intended to be united with Sweden, whilst the loss of this country might well be recompensed to Denmark by the grant of Swedish Pomerania. With respect to the subsidy Bernadotte declared that Sweden could not equip an army without it, and that the value of twenty millions which Napoleon had attributed to the permission to introduce colonial produce on the continent, was quite illusory, since the English would not fail to perceive the motives of this introduction, and immediately put a stop to it. On the twofold grant, therefore, of Norway and a



real subsidy of twenty millions, the Prince Royal offered to bind himself to France by a treaty which must, doubtless, violate that which he had signed with Russia.

Napoleon was excessively irritated at this message, and severely blamed and ridiculed the blindness of the Prince Royal, which rendered him willing to resign Finland to Russia. "*Le miserable!*" exclaimed Napoleon repeatedly; "he is untrue to himself, to Sweden, and to his native country; he is not worthy of occupying my attention; let no one mention his name to me, let no answer be sent to his message, either officially or privately."

This resolution, although very honest and almost inevitable on account of the difficulty of persuading Denmark to resign Norway, must, nevertheless, be very much regretted, for thirty or forty thousand Swedes threatening St. Petersburg instead of Hamburg, would have changed the destinies of the war.

The second diplomatic matter which now occupied Napoleon's attention was the declaration to be published at the commencement of the war; and as a motive was necessary for an immediate rupture so as to enable the French troops, with some show of decency, to cross the Niemen about the 20th or 25th of June, Napoleon, with his usual address, devised one which, having little real foundation, was sufficiently specious to deceive many historians; and this was, that Russia having demanded the evacuation of Prussia as the preliminary to any negotiation, had attempted to impose upon France a dishonourable condition. This pretext was contrary to the truth, since Russia had demanded the evacuation, not as a preliminary condition but as an assured consequence of any negotiation on the disputed points. To this assumed offence was added the provocation occasioned, it was said, by Prince Kourakin's reiterated demands for his passports. Some plausible pretext was wanting for the immediate commencement of hostilities, and Napoleon adopted these for the want of better. M. de Lauriston was ordered, therefore, to demand his passports immediately, under the pretext that the endeavour to make us evacuate Prussia having become public was an outrage which could not be tolerated; but in case he should have already proceeded to Wilna (and this renders completely nugatory the idea that the refusal to admit him to Wilna was the cause of the rupture), he was directed not to demand his passports before the 22nd, Napoleon wishing to cross the Niemen on the 22nd or 23rd. At the same time he was informed that the dispatch written to him on the 16th from Königsberg would be antedated, and appear to have been sent from Thorn on the 12th, in order to persuade the Russians that he was more distant, and



less in a position to commence active proceedings than he really was.

This diplomatic formality having been accomplished, Napoleon departed from Königsberg to join his troops on the Pregel. His first care was to provide his troops with provisions sufficient for ten days, in the course of which he hoped, as at Ulm in 1805, at Jena in 1806, and at Ratisbonne in 1809, to strike one of those terrible blows which, from the very commencement of operations, usually disconcerted his enemies during the remainder of the war; and with a view to this object Napoleon repaired to Insterberg, where he arrived on the evening of the 17th of June.

In accordance with the general plan which he had formed for his first operation, Napoleon resolved to pass the Niemen at Kowno; and to comprehend the motives which induced him to take this resolution we must glance at the vast countries which were to be the theatre of this formidable war, which was to be the greatest and most tragic that had ever occurred.

The immense plains which stretch from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, are traversed on one side by the Oder, the Vistula, the Pregel, the Niemen, and the Dwina, rivers flowing to the west, and on the other by the Dniester, the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga, rivers flowing to the east, and compose, as is well known, the territory of old Prussia, old Poland, and Russia; and it was on these vast plains that Napoleon was about to endeavour to overcome, by the efforts of his genius, the greatest difficulties of war, namely, those which are presented by distant tracts of country, especially when they are neither cultivated nor inhabited. The lower portion of these plains, and so to say, the embouchures of the Oder, the Vistula, the Pregel, and the Niemen, form the sad but prodigiously fertile territory of old Prussia. By ascending these streams and proceeding from west to east we arrive at more sterile districts, where there are fewer inhabitants and more forests and marshes; and these characteristics we find in still stronger development as we proceed farther to the east, towards the sources of the Vistula, the Narew, the Niemen, and the Dwina. Proceeding from the sources of the Vistula and its tributaries, and those of the Niemen and the Dwina, towards those of the Dniester and the Dnieper, we encounter a soil of which the uncertain inclination offers so slight a flow to the waters on its surface, that it is covered with marshes and dense forests. Still advancing to the east across this district we arrive between the sources of the Dwina and the Dnieper, about twenty leagues distant from each other, and find our-

selves in a species of opening extending from Witepsk to Smolensk, by which we emerge from old Poland into Russia, and reach a country in which, the waters flowing more freely, the marshes and forests disappear, and we see before us the plains of old Russia, on the bosom of which rises Moscow, Moscow the holy, as it is named by the patriotism of its children.

With his unequalled coup d'œil, Napoleon had perceived at a glance that his march should be directed towards this opening, which is situated between the sources of the Dwina and the Dnieper, between Witepsk and Smolensk. It is here that are situated, in fact, the gates of the East, and where formerly the Poles and the Muscovites, in their alternate victories and defeats, were accustomed to be reciprocally stopped, for the Dwina on one side, and the Dnieper on the other, were the limit between Russia and old Poland, before the famous partition, which had been the misfortune and the shame of the last age.

But before these gates could be reached it was necessary to traverse old Prussia, and that part of Poland which had recently been reconstituted as the grand Duchy of Warsaw.

The upper course of the river Bug and the upper course of the river Narew, both tributaries of the Vistula, formed by their inflexions the first part of the boundary line of the grand Duchy on the side of Russia; and this frontier line after having sometimes followed the Bug and sometimes the Narew, Brezesc-litowsky to the environs of Grodno, joins the Niemen at Grodno, and pursues the course of this stream rising to the north as far as Kowno, thus separating Poland properly so called from Lithuania. At Kowno the Niemen, definitively taking its course to the west and running towards Tilsit, no longer separates Poland but old Prussia from Russia. The frontier line which had to be now crossed ran, therefore, to the north, from Brezesc to Grodno, following by turns the Bug or the Narew, then running still more to the north from Grodno to Kowno, following the Niemen, and finally turning abruptly towards the Kowno, proceeding in this direction as far as Tilsit, and from this point following the course of the Niemen. It made, therefore, at its northern extremity an angle towards Kowno, and it was there that Napoleon had determined to pass the Niemen, to gain a point from which, according to circumstances, he might halt, or from which he might set forth to force the gates of old Prussia and plunge into its immense plains.

The disposition of the Russian forces was of a nature to confirm Napoleon in his choice of this route; for the Rus-

sians, although they had their advanced posts at the very frontier of their territory, on the upper streams of the Bug and the Narew and along the Niemen, nevertheless only regarded the Dwina and the Dnieper as the true line of defence. These rivers, as we have already said, rising at the distance of twenty leagues from each other and flowing, the Dwina towards the Baltic and the Dnieper towards the Black Sea, presented, with the exception of the opening between Witepsk and Smolensk, a continued and immense line running from the north-west to the south-east, and traversing the whole empire from Riga to Nicholaieff. Since they had commenced the concentration of their forces the Russians had naturally formed two principal collections of troops, one on the Dwina from Witepsk to Dunaburg, the other on the Dnieper from Smolensk to Rogaczew, and these collections of troops had gradually been converted into two armies, which had been advanced, the first to Ulm, the second to Minsk, with the intention that they should unite, or act separately, according to circumstances. The first of these armies commanded by General Barclay de Tolly, posted on the Dwina, with its head quarters at Wilna, and its advanced posts at Kowno on the Niemen, was to receive the reserves from the north of the empire; whilst a second, commanded by Prince Bragation, posted on the Dnieper, with its head quarters at Minsk, and its advanced posts at Grodno on the Niemen, was to receive the reserves of the centre of the empire, and to unite itself by means of General Tormasof's army with the troops of Turkey.

Amongst all the confused and contradictory reports of the agents sent to reconnoitre the enemy's position Napoleon's military genius had clearly shown him that there must be an army on the Dwina, and another on the Dnieper; the one of which (numbering one hundred and fifty thousand men) would be in a position to advance in the direction of Wilna and Kowno, whilst the other (numbering a hundred thousand men) would advance in the direction of Minsk and Grodno. This being actually the case Napoleon immediately determined on his plan of operations.

The Niemen, as has already been stated, flows northwards from Grodno to Kowno, and there making an abrupt turn flows to the west from Kowno to Tilsit. By advancing, therefore, upon Kowno in the bason of the angle formed by the Niemen, Napoleon would have but to pass the Niemen at Kowno with two hundred thousand men, to advance upon Wilna with that terrible energy which always distinguished his commencement of operations; and by placing himself there between the army of the Dwina and that of



the Dnieper, he would secure the separation of those armies from each other during the remainder of the campaign ; and would thus, moreover, be in a position to advance upon Moscow, since he would have but on his right and his left the divided elements of the Russian power.

For the execution of this plan Napoleon determined to unite under his own command the corps of Marshals Davoust, Oudinot, Ney, and the imperial guard, and two of the four corps of the cavalry reserve ; amounting altogether to two hundred thousand men ; and with this crushing mass of troops to advance by Kowno upon Wilna, whilst Marshal Macdonald with thirty thousand men should pass the Niemen at Tilsit on his left, take possession of the two banks of this stream, and ensure its free navigation by our convoys ; Prince Eugene at the head of about eighty thousand troops should cross on his right at a place named Prenn ; and King Jerome at the head of seventy thousand troops should cross it at Grodno.

Having made the most detailed arrangements for the execution of his vast plans, Napoleon quitted Königsberg on the 17th to proceed by Vehlau, Insterburg, and Gumbinnen, to the Pregel, a river that flows parallel with, but some leagues behind, the Niemen, and on the banks of which all our corps d'armée had taken up positions for the purpose of receiving their provisions. Having here reviewed the various corps Napoleon hastened, by means of the waggons which had already arrived, the conveyance from Vehlau to Gumbinnen of sufficient rations to enable each corps to take with it at least six days' provisions, instead of the ten days' provisions he had hoped to have provided them with during the first operations ; and sent forward the cavalry reserve, and the reserve of artillery, and the pontoon equipages, ordering Marshal Davoust to escort them with his corps to Wilkowsk, so that they should arrive before Kowno by the 22nd or 23rd. On the 21st Napoleon left Gumbinnen, and arriving at Wilkowsk on the 22nd was only separated from Kowno and the Niemen by the great forest of Wilkowsk. The fatal moment had, therefore, now arrived, and he was on the bank of that river which may well be said to have been the rubicon of his prosperity. All the corps had reached the bank of the Niemen and he had no longer cause to hesitate to cross it.

Having ordered Marshal Macdonald on his left, and Prince Eugene on his right, to cross the Niemen at Tilsit and Prenn respectively as soon as possible, and directed King Jerome to reach Grodno by the 30th at the latest, Napoleon, on the 23rd of June debouched from the forest of Wilko-



wisk with two hundred thousand troops, leading them above Kowno opposite the river they were about to cross. General Haxo, after a careful reconnaissance had discovered, a league and a half above Kowno, towards a place named Ponieon, a point where the Niemen afforded great facilities for its passage, and Napoleon having discovered by personal inspection that the position offered the advantages attributed to it by General Haxo, ordered General Eblé to throw three bridges across it that same night. Before dawn this order was executed and the light cavalry enabled to pass to the opposite bank.

On the morning of the 24th of June, whilst the sun, rising brilliantly, illumined one of the most magnificent spectacles ever seen, the following short and energetic address was read to the troops, who were inspired with the utmost ardour. "Soldiers! The second Polish war has commenced. The first ended at Friedland and at Tilsit! . . . At Tilsit Russia swore an eternal alliance with France and war against England. She now violates her oaths; and refuses any explanation of her strange conduct . . . Russia is constrained by a fatality; she is about to meet her fate. Does she suppose that we are degenerate?—that we are no longer the soldiers of Austerlitz? She offered us the choice of war or dishonour, and we made our choice without hesitation. Let us march then, let us pass the Niemen, let us carry the war into her own territory. The second Polish war shall bring glory to the French arms; and when we conclude peace, it shall be a peace that shall destroy the ill-omened influence that Russia has exercised on the affairs of Europe during the last fifty years."

This proclamation having been vehemently applauded, the troops descended from the heights in three long columns. Marshal Davoust's infantry, preceded by the light cavalry, were the first to cross the river; and each division passing in its turn to the opposite bank, arrayed itself in battle array on the plain on the farther side, the infantry in close columns, the artillery in the intervals between the infantry, the light cavalry in advance, and the heavy cavalry in the rear. The corps of Marshals Oudinot and Ney followed; then the guard; and after the guard, the *parks*. Within a few hours the right bank was covered with these magnificent troops which, descending from the heights of the left bank, and pouring down in long files upon three points, seemed like three irresistible torrents filling with their waters the plain into which they poured.

After having contemplated for some hours this extraordinary spectacle, Napoleon quitted the height on which his

tents had been pitched, and descending to the Niemen crossed it by one of the bridges, and turning abruptly to the left, and preceded by some squadrons of cavalry, hastened towards Kowno, into which our light cavalry had already entered without difficulty, in pursuit of some Cossacks who had hastened to repass the Wilia. Napoleon, accompanied by the Polish lancers of the guard, was anxious to become immediately master of the two banks of the Wilia, to throw the pontoon bridges across it, and thus be able to pursue the Russian rear-guard; and accordingly the Polish lancers dashed into the river in close column, but when they had reached the middle of the stream they could not resist the force of the current, and although boats were instantly sent to their aid, twenty or thirty paid with their lives for their enthusiastic obedience. However, communication between the two banks of the Wilia was speedily established, and Napoleon went forward to sleep at Kowno, after having ordered Marshal Davoust to échelon his advanced guard on the Wilna route.

Thus the die was cast. Thus Napoleon marched towards the interior of Russia at the head of four hundred thousand men, followed by two hundred thousand others. Thus the same man who two years before, on his return from Austria, had reflected a moment on the lesson given at Essling, had taken pains to bestow peace on the world and on his empire, to endow his throne with hereditary stability, to assume the character of a man of domestic tastes, to appease all enmities, to evacuate Germany, and to force England to make peace;—this same man, we say, was now advancing to the north, leaving behind him France exhausted and disgusted with a murderous glory, all independent minds indignant at his political tyranny, and Europe weary of the yoke he had laid upon her; whilst all these feelings were sullenly cherished in the ranks of the army which he took with him, an army composed of troops of all nations, only held united by his genius and his prosperity. What would become, in the midst of the distant tracts of country it now traversed, of this vast army of six hundred thousand men, following one star, if this star should suddenly pale from before their sight? This problem, to our misfortune, has been solved for the world in a manner it can never forget! but it still remains to inform it, by the detailed narrative of events, of that of which it has only been informed by the clamour of a terrible catastrophe. In this sad and heroic recital we are about to engage. Glory we shall meet with at every step; but of good fortune not a trace beyond the Niemen.



HISTORY  
OF THE  
CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE  
OF  
FRANCE UNDER NAPOLEON.

FORMING A SEQUEL TO  
“THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.”

BY  
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OF

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with the object of passing the Dnieper below Smolensk, surprising this town, turning the Russians and driving them back on the Dwina—In the meantime the Russians, disconcerted by Napoleon's movements, and perceiving the danger of Smolensk, fall back for the purpose of defending this town—March of the French troops upon Smolensk—Brilliant combat of Krasnoé—Arrival of the French before Smolensk—Immense assemblage of men around this unfortunate town—Attack and capture of Smolensk by Ney and Davoust—Retreat of the Russians upon Dorogobouge—Marshal Ney encounters a portion of the Russian rear guard—Sanguinary battle of Valoutina—Death of General Gudin—Napoleon's chagrin at the successive failure of the best combinations he had ever devised—Grave question whether it would be better to halt at Smolensk for the purpose of wintering in Lithuania or to march forward for the purpose of preventing the political dangers which would result from a prolonged war—Whilst he is deliberating on this point Napoleon hears that General St. Cyr, who had replaced Marshal Oudinot who had been wounded, gained on the 18th of August, a victory over the army of Wittgenstein at Polotsk, that Generals Schwarzenberg and Reynier had gained another victory at Gorodeczna on the 12th of August over the army of Volhynia; that Marshals Davoust and Murat, sent in pursuit of the main Russian army, had found it in position beyond Dorogobouge, and apparently willing to engage—On receipt of this last news Napoleon departs from Smolensk with the remainder of the army for the purpose of terminating the campaign by a great battle—His arrival at Dorogobouge—Retreat of the Russian army, its march upon Wiasma—Napoleon determines to march in pursuit—Operations which he orders on his wings and his rear during his projected march—The 9th corps, under Marshal Victor, is brought from Berlin to Wilna to cover the rear of the army; the 11th under Marshal Augereau replaces the 9th at Berlin—March of the main army upon Wiasma—Aspect of Russia—Numerous conflagrations caused by the Russians along the whole line of the route from Smolensk to Moscow—Excitement of public feeling in Russia and aversion to the plan of retreating and devastating the country before the French army—Unpopularity of Barclay de Tolly, accused of being the author or executor of this system, and dispatch of General Kutusof to replace him—Character of General Kutusof and his arrival at the army—Although inclined to the defensive system he resolves to engage the French troops before Moscow—March of the French army from Wiasma upon Ghjat—Some days of bad weather make Napoleon hesitate between the project of a retreat and that of pursuing the Russian army—The return of fine weather induces him in opposition to the advice of his principal officers, to continue his onward march—Arrival on the vast plain of Borodino on the 5th of September—Capture of the redoubt of Schwardino on the evening of the 5th of September—Preparation for a great battle—Marshal Davoust proposes to turn the Russian army by his left—Motives which decide the rejection of this proposition—Plan of a direct attack, consisting in seizing by main force the redoubts by which the Russian troops were supported—Military spirit of the French; religious spirit of the Russians—Memorable battle of Moskowa on the 7th of September, 1812—About sixty thousand men hors de combat on the side of the Russians, and thirty thousand on the side of



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## BOOK XLV.

### THE BEREZINA.

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## BOOK XLIV.

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conception by his Lieutenants, and objections to it founded on the state of the army now reduced to a hundred thousand men—Whilst Napoleon is hesitating, he finds that the Russian army has taken up a position on his right flank in the direction of the Kalouga route—Murat is sent in pursuit of it—The Russians established at Taroutino—Napoleon, in an embarrassed position, sends General Lauriston to Kutusof to endeavour to negotiate—Finesse of Kutusof, who feigns to agree to these overtures, and acceptance of a tacit armistice.

HISTORY  
OF  
THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE  
OF  
FRANCE  
UNDER  
NAPOLÉON.

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BOOK XLIV.

MOSCOW.

THE Niemen was crossed on the 24th of June, without any opposition on the part of the Russians, and every circumstance proclaimed that the same motives which had prevented them from offering any resistance in the environs of Kowno, had also had a similar effect with regard to the other portions of their frontier. Having no doubt but that Marshal Macdonald on his left, directed to effect the passage of the Niemen near Tilsit, and that Prince Eugene on his right, directed to cross it in the neighbourhood of Preun, had met with the same facility in the execution of their orders; Napoleon was only anxious to advance upon Wilna, in order to seize the capital of Lithuania, and to place himself between the two hostile armies in such a manner as to prevent their future union. However, before quitting Kowno, he was anxious, whilst his corps should march upon



Wilna, to devote his attention to various points which his rare forethought never neglected. To secure his line of communication when he should advance, had always been one of his first cares, and it was a subject of more than ordinary importance when such immense and difficult tracts of country had to be traversed, through the midst of a hostile cavalry the most perfectly suited to harass the march of an invading army.

With this view he had the materials of the bridges which had been thrown across the river above Kowno, replaced on the waggons, and consigned to the train of Marshal Davoust; and directed the indefatigable General Eblé to construct at Kowno itself, a bridge upon piles, so as to secure an uninterrupted passage across the Niemen. At the same time he ordered him to construct a similar one across the Wilia, in order to render the communications of the army in every way secure. The country afforded an abundant supply of wood for the construction of these works, and the engineer corps was well provided with all the other necessary materials, such as iron-work, cordage, and tools. In the next place, Napoleon took care to surround Kowno with defensive works, that the vast mass of material there collected might be secured from the enemy's attack. When these objects had received sufficient attention, he bestowed a care equally zealous on the construction of hospitals, bakeries, magazines for all sorts of stores, and of boats suitable for the navigation of the Wilia, as far as Wilna; and gave orders with the object of arranging that by a single transit, the convoys which had come from Dantzic by the Vistula, the Frische-haff, the Pregel, the Deime, the canal de Frederic, and the Niemen, should ascend from Kowno as far as Wilna. Unfortunately, the Wilia, much shallower than the Niemen, and having a much more sinuous course, afforded a means of transport scarcely less difficult than that by land. It was estimated that not less than twenty days would be occupied in effecting the passage of the Wilia from Kowno to Wilna, and this was almost the time occupied in the journey from Dantzic to Kowno.

Whilst bestowing his usual zealous attention upon these various objects, Napoleon set his troops in motion. The reports received respecting the enemy's position, (reports which would have been unintelligible to any one but Napoleon,) represented the army of Barclay de Tolly as forming a species of semicircle around Wilna, and connected by a chain of Cossacks with that of Bagration, which was much lower on our right in the environs of Grodno. According to these reports the army of Barclay de Tolly, which

was more particularly opposed to the main body of our troops, was distributed around us in the following manner. Between Tilsit and Kowno, towards Rossiena; and consequently on our left, was said to be stationed the Wittgenstein corps, supposed to number some twenty and odd thousand men, whilst the Bagowouth corps, which, including the Ouvaroff corps of cavalry, amounted to nineteen thousand men, was at Wilkomir; and at Wilna itself, was encamped the Imperial guard, with the reserves, amounting altogether, inclusive of the heavy cavalry, under General Korff, to twenty-four thousand men. Moreover, in front of us, on the Wilna route, but somewhat to our right, were spread other troops, of which the number was unknown, but which could not be inferior to that of the detachments already enumerated. These were Touczkoff's corps, encamped at Nowoi-Troki, numbering about nineteen thousand troops, that of Schouvaloff encamped at Olkeniki, and numbering about fourteen thousand, and finally, on the extreme right, that of Doctoroff, containing about twenty thousand troops, posted at Lida, and connected by eight thousand Cossacks, with the army of Prince Bagration. This distribution of the 130,000 troops under Barclay de Tolly was but imperfectly known, but the fact of its distribution in a semicircle around Wilna, in masses somewhat stronger on our left and front than on our right, and connected by Cossacks with the troops under Bagration, was sufficiently certain to enable Napoleon to order the march of his army upon Wilna with sufficient knowledge of the state of existing circumstances.

Marshal Macdonald on our extreme left, succeeded in crossing without difficulty the Niemen at Tilsit. He had under his command 11,000 Poles, and 17,000 Prusians, and received orders to advance upon Rossiena, without precipitation, in such a manner as to cover the navigation of the Niemen, and to invade Courland in proportion as the Russians should fall back upon the Dwina. Napoleon directed Marshal Oudinot's corps, numbering 36,000 men, upon Janowo, and commanded the Marshal to pass the Wilia for the purpose of advancing upon Wilkomir. It was probable that this corps would encounter that of Wittgenstein, which would traverse Wilkomir in its retreat from Rossiena, and Napoleon reinforced it, therefore, with a division of cuirassiers, belonging to the third corps of the cavalry of reserve. He was anxious, also, to transport beyond the Wilia, but at a point somewhat nearer Wilna, Ney's corps, which also consisted of 36,000 men; for Oudinot and Ney, marching parallel to each other, would be sufficiently strong to keep the enemy in check until aid could be afforded them, even if,

contrary to all probability, they were to fall in with the main body of the Russian army. They would have nothing to fear, therefore, with respect to Wittgenstein or Bagowouth, either separate or united, and by acting in unison would be able to overwhelm them.

Having taken these, almost superabundant, precautions with respect to his left, Napoleon resolved to march directly upon Wilna, with Murat's 20,000 horse, Davoust's 70,000 infantry, and the 36,000 veteran soldiers of the guard; for with 120,000 troops immediately at his command, he felt certain of being able to vanquish all obstacles, and, by piercing the Russian line towards Wilna, of entirely separating Barclay de Tolly from Bagration.

With respect to the enemy's troops posted on our right, although nothing certain was known with respect to them, it was considered that they were situated between Nowoi-troki, and Lida, forming Barclay de Tolly's left wing, and amounting at the most to no more than 40,000 men; and as Prince Eugene would have 80,000 troops at his command in his projected passage of the Niemen at Prenn, he would have no difficulty in resisting them, should the Russians, contrary to their practice, take the offensive.

The execution of these orders, given on the day succeeding the passage of the Niemen, was carried out, whilst Napoleon, established at Kowno, devoted himself to the various subjects demanding his attention which, we have already mentioned; only advancing with the troops in person, when they advanced posts gave information of the presence of the enemy. On the 25th Murat and Davoust advanced, the one at the head of his cavalry, the other at the head of his infantry, as far as Zismary, after having traversed a difficult tract of country in which the Russians could easily have stopped their progress; for their course had lain in fact along the side of the wooded hills which separate the bed of the Wilia from that of the Niemen, confined between these hills and the steep banks of the Niemen and having but little space in case of an attack in which to deploy. On the evening of the 25th they halted at Zismary in a far more favourable country, the angle formed by the Wilia and the Niemen being infinitely more open. On the following day, the 26th, they passed the night on the Jewe road, having met in their march but a few Cossacks, who fled at their approach, after having first set fire, when there was time, to the farms and chateaux. The weather remained clear and serene, but the villages were already only met with at distant intervals, and the opportunities of obtaining supplies had become very rare. The soldiers of Marshal Davoust's corps, carrying their bread on their backs, and being accompanied



by a troop of cattle, were well provided with provisions; but they were somewhat fatigued with the length of their marches, and some of the younger of them, especially of the Illyrians and Dutch, remained on the road exhausted. The horses, especially, suffered much, and for want of oats were driven every evening to feed in the field on the green rye, which gratified whilst it failed to nourish them. The reserve artillery and the waggons loaded with munitions and provisions were in the rear. Murat's cavalry, which, unfortunately, he wore out with useless movements, was already very much fatigued.

By the 27th, Jewe was reached, and as this place is no more than a long day's journey from Wilna, Murat, in order to be able to reach this city early on the following day, advanced to Riconti, which is three or four leagues in advance of Jewe.

But neither the court of the Czar, nor his army, were to be found at Wilna. The passage of the Niemen, commenced on the morning of the 24th, was known on the evening of the same day at Wilna, whilst the Emperor Alexander was present at a ball given by General Benningson.

The news of this event, brought by a domestic of Count Romanzoff's, was a source of considerable consternation, and added to the confusion which already existed in the staff. Wishing to have the advantage of much advice Alexander had carried with him a crowd of personages of very various character, rank, and station. Independently of General Barclay de Tolly, who did not give his orders as general in chief of the army, but as minister of war, Alexander had with him General Benningsen, the grand duke Constantine, an old minister of war named Araktchejef, the ministers of Police and the interior, MM. de Balachoff and Kotchoubey, and Prince Walkouski; this last personage performing the functions of chief of the Emperor's staff. To these Russians, who were for the most part animated with violent sentiments, were added a number of foreigners who had fled to Alexander from the persecutions of Napoleon, or from his influence and his glory, which they detested. Amongst these were an officer of engineers named Michaux, of Piedmontese origin, and in high consideration with Alexander; a Swede, the Count of Armfeld, who had been compelled by the political events of Sweden to fly to Russia, a man of some mind, but nevertheless held in little esteem; an Italian named Paulucci, very imaginative and very petulant; several Germans, of whom may be more particularly mentioned the Baron de Stein, whom Napoleon had excluded from the Prussian government, who was the idol in Germany of all the enemies



of France, and whose character presented a strange mixture of liberalism and aristocratic sentiment blended with the most ardent patriotism; an active, intelligent, and well informed officer of the staff, ever eager to put himself forward, Colonel Walzogen; and lastly, a Prussian General, Pfuhl, who was more a savant than a military man, who exercised great influence over Alexander, for which reason he was detested by all the habitués of the court, and who was regarded by some persons as possessed of superior genius, whilst others considered him as incapable of rendering the least real service, and only capable of influencing for a certain time by his very singularity of character the mobile and dreamy imagination of the Emperor Alexander.

It was in the midst of all these counsellors that Alexander, who had more mind than any of them, but was less capable than they of grasping and holding firmly an idea, had lived for many months, when Napoleon's cannon forced him from his wavering and compelled him to decide upon some plan for the campaign.

Amongst the various above named personages two ideas had been constant subjects of debate. The men of impetuous spirit, and who, as is usually the case, were not the most enlightened, were averse to the plan of awaiting Napoleon's advance, and were desirous that the Russian armies should, on the contrary, be marched upon old Prussia and Poland, for the purpose of ravaging these countries, which were either the allies or the accomplices of France, and that they should retreat only after having increased by two hundred leagues the desert in which it was hoped that Napoleon would be lost. Calm and sensible men, however, regarded this project as dangerous, and maintained, with reason, that to advance to meet Napoleon was to shorten for him the road over which he had to pass, to relieve him consequently from the most serious difficulties of the war, which were those arising from the immense distances he had to traverse, and to afford him on the very borders of his own territory the opportunity, which he so much desired, of fighting a new battle of Austerlitz, of Friedland, a battle which he would doubtless gain, and the result of which in his favour would decide the whole question, or at least place him in the ascendant during the remainder of the war. They added that, instead of diminishing the distances which Napoleon's troops had to traverse, it was absolutely necessary, on the other hand, to increase them by retreating before them, and leaving them to continue their mission unchecked, so that when they should have advanced into the very heart of Russia, and become exhausted by hunger and fatigue, it would be possible to

overwhelm them and drive them back, half destroyed, across the Russian frontier. The inconvenience of this plan was, indeed, that instead of giving up old Prussia and Poland to ravage it demanded the devastation of Russia itself; but, nevertheless, the prospect of almost certain success was an argument of such weight that no consideration deserved to be placed in the balance with it.

The controversy between the maintainers of these two sets of opinions which had commenced at St. Petersburg, had not ceased at Wilna when the news that Napoleon had crossed the Niemen put an end to General Benningsen's ball. Alexander's intellect was of too high an order to permit him to hesitate respecting such a subject; indeed, to force Napoleon to endure the same species of campaign amidst the climate of Russia which Masséna had been compelled to endure amidst that of the Peninsula was manifestly pointed out by existing circumstances as the proper course to pursue; and political reasons moreover, left him no room for hesitation. Constantly anxious to obtain the sympathy of the Russian people, of Europe, and even of France in his struggle with Napoleon, he had carefully abstained from any action which could have given him the appearance of being the aggressor, and in pursuance of this system, therefore, he determined to await the enemy's attack.

This course of conduct was very simple and dictated by sound reason. But a desire had existed for the construction of an entire system of conducting the war, and General Pfuhl was the author of such a system, which he propounded to Alexander with an appearance of profundity which was well calculated to fascinate the Emperor's imagination.

Whenever a great man, drawing his inspiration not from theories but from circumstances, has performed great actions, it invariably happens that he is succeeded by imitators who substitute systems for the great deeds which have been the offspring of true genius. In the eighteenth century there was a general proneness to imitate the military manœuvres of Frederick, and after the battle of Leuthen to propound systems founded on the *ordre oblique*, to which was attributed all the Prussian monarch's success. In like manner after the year 1800, and the campaigns of General Bonaparte, who had known how to manœuvre so skilfully on his adversary's wings and lines of communication, nothing was spoken of but turning the enemy; and at Austerlitz, accordingly, Alexander's advisers had endeavoured to turn Napoleon, with what result we know. In 1810 a man of clear intelligence and decided character, Lord Wellington, aided by an extraordinarily fortunate conjunction of circumstances, accom-

plished a brilliant campaign in Portugal, and his manœuvres were everywhere quoted throughout Europe, as those which it would be henceforth necessary to follow. To fall back before the enemy, destroying everything in the line of retreat, to withdraw into an impregnable camp, to remain there until the enemy should be exhausted, and then to sally forth to overwhelm him, composed, in the estimation of some persons, since Torres Vedras, the whole science of war; and of this new science General Pfuhl had constituted himself the chief master in the midst of the Russian staff. With the exception of the Czar, who found deep satisfaction in his pretended profundities, the General had worn out and disgusted every one with his dogmatism, his pretence, and his pride; but Alexander regarded him as an unappreciated genius, and entrusted him with the task of drawing up the plan of the impending war.

General Pfuhl after having studied the map of Russia had remarked, as indeed any one might at the first glance, that the long transverse line of the Dwina and the Dnieper form from the north west to the south east, a vast and excellent line of interior defence. He desired, therefore, that the Russian armies should fall back upon this line, form there a species of impregnable Torres Vedras, and pursue then a course similar to that which had been pursued by the English and Spanish armies in Portugal. Having, moreover, in the course of his attentive study of the map of Russia remarked at Drissa on the Dwina a place which seemed suitable for the establishment of an entrenched camp, he had proposed to form one at this place, and Alexander, adopting this proposition, had sent the engineer, Michaux, to trace out and superintend the execution of the works. In addition, also, to this camp of Drissa, General Pfuhl determined to effect a distribution of the Russian forces according to a system which he had deduced from the operations of Lord Wellington in Portugal; and accordingly he demanded two armies, a principal one and a secondary one; the one, on the Dwina, falling back before the French and retreating from them into the camp at Drissa; the other, on the Dnieper, also falling back before the French, but destined to assail them in flank and rear when the time should come for the Russian troops to act on the offensive. In accordance with this plan, therefore, had been formed the two armies of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration.

To retreat before the French and thus to induce them to plunge into the very depths of Russia, was certainly a most just idea, from which Alexander was in time to reap the greatest benefits, and which, at the time of which we speak,

was generally entertained throughout Europe. But why should there be an entrenched camp, and above all why so near the frontier? Lord Wellington had taken care to provide an entrenched camp to preserve his troops from being driven into the sea; but the Russians already possessed an equivalent for an entrenched camp in all the space extending to the shore of the icy ocean. Moreover, to fix the point at which it was to be attempted to check the progress of the French on the Dwina, was to attempt to check them at the very outset of their invasion, whilst still in full vigour and possession of all their resources, as the event proved, and to expose the camp to the danger of being carried by assault. And finally, admitting that operations could be successfully carried on against the enemy's flank, it would be a source of great danger to divide, from the very commencement of the campaign, the main body of the Russian forces; and it would have been much better to have left the troops returning from Asia to form this flank army, destined to harass the French, and perhaps, to cut off their retreat. In the meantime Alexander, who reserved to himself and a few German adepts the discussion of this plan, carried into execution its most important preliminary operations, advancing his troops, as we have seen, in two masses, the one resting on the Dwina, the other on the Dnieper, and directed, the first towards Wilna, the second towards Minsk.

There could be no objection to this arrangement of the troops, for it was very natural that the two principal bodies of the German troops should assemble behind these two rivers. But the more prudent members of the staff fully expected that these two armies were to be speedily united, and to fall back before the enemy, delaying to attack him until worn out and exhausted, and enticed sufficiently far into the Russian territory. This was particularly the advice of Barclay de Tolly, a cold, firm, intelligent officer, a scion of a Scotch family established in Courland, and on account of his foreign origin, regarded with little favor by the Russians, the fermentation of whose national passions made them regard all strangers with dislike. This advice, however, as we have already seen, was distasteful to many; for the men of impetuous character, whether Russians, Germans, Swedes, or Italians, detesting France, her revolution, and her glory, were excessively averse to the idea of granting to France the honour of seeing the Russian armies retreat before her troops, and declared that it would be far better to invade Prussia and Poland, to ravage a vast extent of territory, and afford Germany the opportunity she desired of throwing off Napoleon's yoke. This latter opinion was the one which was chiefly



maintained at the head quarters of the Prince Bagration ; a prince of Georgian origin, courageous and skilful in the management of troops, but wanting in the talents of a commander in chief, and whose real wish, at this time, was to advance and make a furious attack upon the French. Jealous of Barclay, distrustful of the military savans, he favoured the expression amongst the persons around him of exclamations against the strangers who advised Alexander, and endeavoured to persuade him, they declared, to adopt a timid course of action.

Alexander had thus advanced with his two armies, secretly believing, although he refrained as yet from declaring his opinion, that the safety of his kingdom would be found in the adoption of the plan propounded by General Pfuhl. As, however, he was unwilling as yet to announce his determination, he did not dare to nominate a commander-in-chief, since he could not do so without giving evident proof as to which of the systems he inclined ; and he accordingly entrusted Barclay de Tolly with the duty of giving his orders, as Minister of War ; but the sudden apparition of Napoleon beyond the Niemen left him no longer at leisure to hesitate, and forced him to adopt some plan for the conduct of the campaign.

Alexander had been inclined to convoke a council of war, composed of councillors of all nations, and to submit to its consideration the plan propounded by General Pfuhl, not indeed by the General's own mouth, for he was a man quite incapable of defending his system against adverse objections, but by that of Colonel Wolzogen, his usual interpreter, and a man whose mind was at once clear and subtle. Colonel Wolzogen, however, had shown him that such a course would but lead to the brink of a fresh chaos, and that it would be far better simply to select at once a commander in chief, and to confide to him the execution of the plan which should be selected. For such a post General Barclay de Tolly was manifestly the most fitted, both on account of his obedience, his firmness, his practical talents, and his position as minister of war. Besides, the approach of the enemy with a crushing mass of about two hundred thousand men, when Russia had but one hundred and thirty thousand with which to meet them, had to a great degree quelled the eagerness of the partisans of an offensive system of action ; and there was no reason, therefore, to fear that a retrograde movement, which had become inevitable, would meet with any great degree of blame. Alexander, consequently, adopted the advice of Colonel Wolzogen, the course pointed out by it being indeed the only one left open in the existing state of

circumstances, and confided to General Barclay de Tolly, not as General-in-Chief, but as Minister of War, the conduct of the retreat of the principal army upon the Dwina, in the direction of the camp of Drissa. These arrangements having been made, he set forth with a crowd of his counsellors, following the road which leads to Drissa by Swenziany and Vidzouy.

It was by no means an easy task to effect, in the presence of Napoleon, whose movements were ordinarily as swift as lightning, the retreat of the six Russian corps, which were posted around Wilna, and composed the principal army.

As we have already said, the first of these corps, under the command of Count Wittgenstein, was at Rosiena, where it formed the Russian extreme right, and was opposed to the extreme left of the French. The second, under General Bogowouth, was at Janowo; the third, composed of the Russian guard and the reserves, was at Wilna; the fourth under General Touczkoff, was between Kowno and Wilna, at Nowoi-Troki. For these four corps the retreat was easy, for they had to retire directly upon the Dwina, without being exposed to the danger of finding the French in their path; and no greater difficulty existed with regard to the heavy cavalry, which was distributed in two corps of reserve under Generals Ouvaroff and Korff, and posted in the rear. But the fifth corps under Count Schouvaloff, and the sixth under General Doctoroff, posted, the one at Olkeniki, and the other at Lida, and forming the extreme left of the semi-circle which the Russian forces described around Wilna, might, before they regained the Swenziany road, be stopped by the French, who were already on their march to Wilna. In the meantime the Hetman Platow, whose eight thousand Cossacks completed the one hundred and thirty thousand men of the army at the Dwina, was near Grodno.

General Barclay de Tolly hastened to order all the corps to fall back upon the Dwina, in the direction of the camp of Drissa, and directed the two, which were the most unfavourably placed, to conduct their retreat by turning around Wilna, and keeping as far as possible from this city, so as to avoid falling in with the enemy. At the same time he himself, despising the counsellors who had displayed so much eagerness in flying from the enemy, affected to remain with his rear guard, and slowly to retreat with it, disputing the ground with the enemy foot by foot. Meanwhile an order had been sent to Prince Bagration to march on the Dnieper, following as much as possible the course of the Minsk, in order to be in a position to join the principal army, when this

junction should become necessary. The Hetman Platow, who was directed constantly to render his troops a link between those of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, was ordered to harass the French in flank and rear.

Before quitting Wilna the Emperor Alexander, though regarding the war as inevitable, and resolved to maintain it energetically, determined to attempt a last measure which, whilst failing to put a stop to hostilities, would throw the responsibility of the consequences upon Napoleon. Learning that M. de Lauriston had founded the demand for his passports on the demand made by Prince Kourakin for his, and on the pretence that a condition had been attempted to be imposed on the French relative to the evacuation of Prussia, he took pains to answer these two objections so as to place his adversary entirely in the wrong. He directed, therefore, M. de Balachoff, minister of police, a man of spirit and tact, to carry to Napoleon a message expressing his, Alexander's, extreme surprise at Napoleon's sudden rupture of the peace between the two nations without any previous declaration of war; declaring Prince Kourakin's demand for his passports as a most insufficient reason, since the Prince had not been authorized to take the course he had, and that the pretended condition of the evacuation of Prussia could not fairly be a serious cause of complaint, since it had been proposed, not as a necessary preliminary to negotiation, but only as a consequence to be promised and certain, of any pacific arrangement which might be made. Alexander even authorized M. de Balachoff to declare that this evacuation of Prussia was so little an absolute condition, that if the French desired to halt on the Niemen, he would consent to negotiate immediately, on the basis indicated in the course of the various preceding communications. These orders having been given Alexander set out on the 26th of June, at the same time addressing a spirited proclamation to his people, in which he pledged himself solemnly never to treat with the enemy so long as he should remain on the Russian territory.

Whilst Alexander was in the act of departing, M. de Balachoff hastened to meet the French army, and found it en route for Wilna. He had at first some difficulty in obtaining the recognition of his character of aide de camp to the Russian Emperor, but, when this difficulty had been overcome, he was conducted to the presence of Murat, who, glittering with gold, and his head covered with plumes, galloped through the midst of his numerous squadrons.

Murat, facile, amiable, and indiscreet as usual, received M. de Balachoff most graciously, affected to deplore the

renewal of the war, to regret his fair Neapolitan kingdom, to be perfectly free from any desire of obtaining that of Poland, and to display himself in the character of a reasonable servant of a most unreasonable master, whilst his manner was full of those gracious demonstrations for which he had a natural talent, notwithstanding his education had been much neglected. He then sent M. de Balachoff to the infantry advanced posts, which were behind those of the cavalry, and there M. de Balachoff being presented to Marshal Davoust was received with coldness, reserve, and silence. Having expressed a desire to be permitted to proceed immediately to the presence of the Emperor the Marshal declined to permit him to do so, alleging his orders, and retaining the envoy in a species of imprisonment until a communication should have been received from head quarters. On the following morning a message arrived that M. de Balachoff was to be detained, to await, until the French should have entered Wilna, the interview he desired with Napoleon.

On the morning of the same day (the 28th), the cavalry under General Bruyère arrived at the gates of Wilna, and encountered there a large detachment of the Russian cavalry, supported by infantry and some pieces of artillery. The charge of the opposed troops was desperate, but the enemy's advanced guard, after having resisted for some moments, withdrew into the city, at the same time burning the bridges across the Wilia, and setting fire to magazines of stores within the town. Marshal Davoust, who had followed Murat's cavalry at a league's distance, entered with it into Wilna, where the Lithuanians, although they had submitted to the Russians for forty years, received the French with joy, and hastened to aid them in repairing the bridge across the Wilia. By the aid of some boats the communication between the two banks of the stream was speedily re-established, and immediate pursuit was made of the Russians, who retreated rapidly but in good order.

Thus the capital of Lithuania was taken almost without a blow, and after only four days of hostilities; and Napoleon entered it in the midst of the assembled crowds of the inhabitants, who gradually caught a spirit of enthusiasm from contact with our soldiers, especially the Polish soldiers, and the remembrance of that liberty which they had formerly enjoyed, but which the most aged of them alone had actually known. The Lithuanian nobles, who were the partisans of Russia, had already fled, and those which were not had awaited the approach of our troops, and readily assisted in the creation of new means for the administration of the country in the interest of the French army, which was at



that moment the interest of Poland also. At the same time their zeal was checked by the terrible fear that this attempt to effect the reconstitution of Poland would not be a genuine one, and that in less than a month the Russian couriers would re-enter Wilna, bearing orders of sequestration and exile.

The first service required at the hands of the inhabitants was the preparation of bread for our soldiers, who had arrived famished for the want, not of meat which they had had in abundance, but of bread, of which they had had scarcely the least supply. Grain was not scarce, but the Russians had taken pains to destroy in every direction flour, mills, and oats, being well aware that the mere possession of corn would not supply the enemy with bread, and that the French could not support for any time without oats the immense number of horses which followed the army. Napoleon now ordered that the masons which accompanied the French armies should be immediately employed in the construction of bakeries; and in the meantime those already existing in the town were seized for the use of the troops, but they could only furnish thirty thousand rations a day, whilst a hundred thousand were required immediately, and this number would be increased in the course of a few days to two hundred thousand.

Whilst Napoleon was devoting his attention to these preliminary matters, the various corps of the army were executing their prescribed movements without any misadventures beyond the inconveniences which were to be expected as the result of over fatigue and unfavourable weather. Marshal Ney, as we have already seen, had passed the Wilia nearer Wilna than Marshal Oudinot, namely, in the environs of Riconti, and had marched in the direction of Maliatouy, perceiving in the distance Bagowouth's corps, which was at first at Wilkomir, but which, in accordance with the retrograde movement made by the Russian corps, had marched from this point in the direction of Swenziany and Drissa. Ney, however, only fell in with the rear guard, which, composed of Cossacks, was eager in devastating with fire every thing which lay in the path of the French troops; but they had not always time to complete this operation, and were compelled, fortunately, to leave some resources at our disposal. In the meantime Marshal Oudinot, having passed the Wilia below, at Janowo, for the purpose of marching upon Wilkomir, had encountered there the troops commanded by Wittgenstein, who had marched from Rossiena to Wilkomir, and who on the morning of the 28th, at the moment when the main body of the French army was entering Wilna, being in position at Deweltowo, at the head of twenty-

four thousand men, displayed to Marshal Oudinot a line of about twenty thousand infantry slowly retreating under cover of a numerous artillery and a numerous body of cavalry. But the Russian General had encountered in Marshal Oudinot a man who would not allow himself to be braved with impunity; and although the latter had at his immediate command only his light cavalry, foot artillery, Verdier's infantry division, and Doumère's cuirassiers, he did not hesitate to attack the Russians, and having speedily driven their cavalry behind the lines of their infantry, he attacked the latter with Verdier's division, and forced it to retreat with a loss in killed and wounded of about four hundred men.

The troops under Marshal Oudinot were as fatigued as those under Marshal Ney, worn out by the marches on their way to the Niemen, as well as by those which they had made since they had passed it. They were in want of bread, salt, and spirits, and utterly disgusted with a diet which consisted of meat without salt, and a little flour mixed with water. At the same time the horses were very much enfeebled by the want of oats. A great number of soldiers remaining in the rear were in a manner lost, for there were but few inhabitants of whom they could ask their way, and those few did not speak Polish.

Such was the situation of affairs on our left and on the other side of the Wilia; and matters were almost in the same state in our centre, on the direct route from Kowno to Wilna, which the last divisions of Marshal Davoust's corps were now traversing, followed by the Imperial Guard. On our right Prince Eugene's corps was altogether backward, for this prince having had to traverse, not old Prussia as had Marshals Davoust, Oudinot, and Ney, but Poland, had crossed with difficulty, at the cost of great efforts and great privations, the sterile and shifting sands of the districts across which lay his route, and had only reached the Niemen on the very day when the main body of the army entered Wilna. In passing the Niemen at Prenn Eugene would debouch upon Nowoi-Troki and Olkeniski, points occupied by the corps of Touczkoff and Schouvaloff, which together numbered no more than thirty-four thousand men, and were consequently quite incapable of holding in check the eighty thousand men of the army of Italy. The difficulties, therefore, which were to be feared by Prince Eugene did not arise from the operations of the enemy, but from natural obstacles on the route he had to traverse.

Up to this time, with the exception of some passing snows, the sky had been serene, and the weather mild, but free

from that excessive heat which is so often experienced in extreme climates, which are by turns deprived of the sun in winter, or oppressed with its ardour in summer. Poland, which in the winter of 1807 had presented so dreary a landscape, was now verdant, and with its vast forests offered to the eye a scenery which was sufficiently agreeable, although wanting in that genuine gaiety, which the presence of man and man's industry always throw over natural scenery. The roads were to a great degree dried by the sun's heat, and presented no insurmountable difficulties.

Suddenly, however, on the evening of the 28th, this favourable state of the weather vanished; the sky was covered with clouds, and a series of terrible storms enveloped almost the whole of Poland. The ground was loosened beneath the tread of the soldiers and horses; and to add to the misfortune, the temperature changed as violently as the aspect of the heavens, becoming suddenly extremely cold. During the three days from the 29th of June to the 1st of July, the state of the weather was frightful, and the bivouacs extremely painful, for the soldiers had to sleep in a species of mud. Many of the younger men were attacked with dysentery, the result not only of the rapid change in the weather, but also of a diet almost exclusively of meat and frequently of pork. A portion of the divisions of Marshal Davoust, which were still, on the 29th, on their march upon Wilna, and the whole of the guard which followed them, being completely without shelter, (for the few dwellings scattered about the country were scarcely sufficient to lodge the staffs) had to endure the greatest sufferings. The troops of Marshals Ney and Oudinot suffered somewhat less, for the country which they traversed had been visited by neither French nor Russians; but on the right the sufferings endured by the corps of Prince Eugene, which was now crossing the Niemen, were much greater. The bridge had been thrown across the stream on the evening of the 29th, and a division had already crossed the Niemen when a violent storm of mingled hail, rain, wind, and lightning, swept away the tents and threw the troops into a species of universal panic. It was impossible for the soldiers to lie down on the inundated soil, the passage across the stream was interrupted, and during forty-eight hours, one half of the troops remained on one side of the stream, and one half on the other.

Prince Eugene's corps succeeded at length, however, in crossing the Niemen, and speedily advanced on Nowoi-Troki, although still in the state of disorder which had been produced by the sudden occurrence of bad weather. Napoleon

had levied horses for his armies as for his conscripts, by thousands, in Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, without paying regard to their age ; for although he had given some wise recommendations on this point, the number he required had rendered it quite impossible to follow them. Many of these horses, therefore, harnessed too young and without any previous training, to immense waggons, were compelled to draw them. The cold and wet nights of the 29th and 30th of June destroyed many thousands, being especially destructive to those of Prince Eugene's corps, and in two days the roads were covered with dead horses and abandoned waggons. If the men and officers of the baggage train had been more experienced, they would have known how to remedy the misfortune to some extent by assembling in *parcs* by the side of the roads the waggons which had lost their horses, leaving detachments to guard them, and carrying forward with the horses which still remained those stores of which there was the most immediate need. In Prince Eugene's corps, which contained many Italians and Bavarians the disorder was extreme ; and it also existed to a great extent in the rear of Marshal Davoust's corps, amongst the Dutch and Hanseatic troops and the Spaniards of the first corps ; and these latter being foreigners, and little interested, therefore, in the honour of an army which was French, and feeling but slight enthusiasm for a cause which was not their own, were the first to disband themselves and to take advantage of the intricate character of the wooded country around to desert, and devote themselves to the pursuit of plunder, whilst even amongst our own troops there was some relaxation of discipline, but it existed only amongst those who, having been refractory conscripts, had been brought in by the columns mobile and forcibly compelled to serve. Between the Niemen and Wilna there were now from twenty-five to thirty thousand Bavarian, Italian, Wurtembergian, Hanseatic, Spanish, and French deserters, who pillaged equally the abandoned waggons, and the castles of the Lithuanian nobles. In the meantime Prince Eugene, whose corps had suffered most from these complicated evils, having arrived at Nowoi-Troki, on the right of Wilna, although very unwilling to cause Napoleon any annoyance, informed him of the state of affairs ; whilst from the other Generals proceeded similar reports.

Napoleon was not the man, however, to be terrified by such misadventures as these at the commencement of a campaign, for the successful conduct of which he had taken so many precautions ; and he had, moreover, plucked a triumph in 1807, from the midst of a state of affairs which was very



similar, although on a less scale. He had no doubt, therefore, that he would succeed in vanquishing the present difficulties, which he regarded as entirely local, but which sprang, unfortunately, from radical causes. In Portugal, Masséna's soldiers had quitted the ranks for the purpose of procuring sustenance ; but they had not failed to return in the evening, for they were Frenchmen and veteran warriors. But a large proportion of the troops which composed the army with which Napoleon invaded Russia, were neither Frenchmen nor veterans.

A halt of fifteen days at Wilna was the means by which Napoleon proposed to remedy the existing evils and to rally the stragglers ; and more especially to bring up the long train of baggage waggons, which stretched not only from Wilna to the Niemen, but from the Niemen to the Vistula, from the Vistula to the Elbe. Such a halt would also afford the opportunity of arranging the affairs of Lithuania, and establishing there a Polish government, of which there was so much need. There could be no doubt, indeed, that a delay of fifteen days could be fully employed by Napoleon in the arrangement of many important matters, but it was a question whether such a delay would not nullify Napoleon's excellent plan of dividing the Russian line. Would not such a halt enable Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, who were retreating upon the Dwina and the Dnieper respectively, to unite their troops beyond these two rivers ? Again, would it not have been better, if such a halt were necessary, to have made it at Kowno, before the Niemen had been passed, and the enemy put on the alert by the violation of the frontiers ; and was it not better, on the other hand, now that the rash step had been taken, to follow out the bold course which had been adopted and to march forward without delay, with the object of attacking the Russians and obtaining some decisive result before they should have had time to withdraw into the depths of their country. These were grave questions, but they appeared to be a source of no embarrassment to Napoleon, for whilst he entertained the idea of rallying the stragglers, establishing an effective police in his rear, reorganising the land transport service, and creating a government for Lithuania, he by no means relinquished his plan of placing himself between the two principal Russian armies in such a manner as to isolate the one from the other during the remainder of the campaign.

The entrance of the troops into Wilna, which took place on the 29th of June, had scarcely been effected, when the reports of the light cavalry announced that many thousand Russian troops were on their march around Wilna, and were

advancing in a curved line from our right to our left doubtless with the purpose of joining Barclay de Tolly on the Dwina. In any case there was an opportunity of intercepting these troops, since even if Bagration were to be encountered, our troops would only have to meet the head of his corps, as it had to ascend northwards the whole distance from Grodno to Wilna, and there would certainly be time to intercept its road. Napoleon resolved, therefore, whilst still opposing Barclay de Tolly with his left, to make a rapid march on his right with the purpose of intercepting Bagration, enveloping him if possible, or driving him into the marshes of Pinsk, and thus paralysing him for the rest of the campaign.

The description already given of the theatre of war will enable the reader to perceive what were the movements which Napoleon had to make for the execution of his proposed plan. From the Rhine to the Niemen Napoleon's course had been north-east; after the passage of the Niemen it had taken an easterly direction, and retained it as far as Moscow. When the Niemen had been crossed and the course of the Wilia ascended as far as Wilna, our troops encountered the great transverse lines, of which we have already spoken, formed by the Dwina and the Dnieper, and had naturally advanced to the open space left by these streams at their birth between Witebsk and Smolensk; and in this movement the left wing had faced the Dwina, towards which were advancing the troops under Barclay de Tolly, and the right wing had faced the Dnieper, upon which Bagration was retreating. Napoleon's object being now, on the one hand, to halt so as to be enabled to rally the troops and baggage which had fallen into the rear, and on the other hand to pursue Bagration so energetically as to separate him from Barclay de Tolly, he determined to halt his left, which had but a short distance to traverse to reach the Dwina, whilst he endeavoured with his right to precede Bagration on the Dnieper.

Macdonald, who had at first been directed upon Rossiena, had been since ordered to proceed to the right upon Poniewiez, for the purpose of joining Oudinot; whilst the latter was in like manner ordered to take a direction to the right between Avanta and Widzouy, for the purpose of approaching close to Ney; and Ney himself was ordered to march towards Swenziany, close to Murat, who with all his cavalry was pursuing by Gloubokoé the Russian army on its retreat upon the Dwina. In the next place these commanders, whose troops might have amounted altogether since the last march to about one hundred and seven or one hundred and eight

thousand men, to remain in observation to mark the operations of the rest of the army, to rally their stragglers, to collect grain, and to convert it into flour, to repair the mills which had been destroyed by the Russians, to construct ovens, to bring up their heavy artillery and baggage trains, and to employ themselves, in short, in concentrating and reorganising their strength, in guarding against the attacks of the enemy, and carefully watching his least movements.

For the purpose of connecting this immoveable left with his right, which was to be very active, Napoleon ordered Murat to extend his cavalry from Gloubokoé to Wileika, at the same time arranging that it should be supported by one or two of the divisions of Marshal Davoust, which should first arrive in line; and to still further strengthen this connexion between the left and the right, he proposed to march upon the same point Prince Eugene's corps, which was now halting at Nowoi-Troki, for the purpose of taking a little repose and reorganising its disordered columns.

It was with Marshal Davoust's corps, which was always in the best order, and the most thoroughly provided for undertaking a march, that Napoleon resolved to make his projected movements on his right, against the troops which had been seen marching in a circular direction around Wilna, and which were, as we have already said, either the last troops of Barclay's corps, or the head of that of Bagration. On the 29th of June, therefore, the light cavalry of Davoust's corps was put in motion under the orders of Generals Pojol and Bordessoulle, the former taking the road from Ochmiana to Minsk, and the latter proceeding by the Lida road in the direction of Wiokowisk; these being the two great routes which descended from Wilna towards southern Lithuania, and on which might be met either the delayed detachments of Barclay's corps, or the whole of the army under Bagration.

On the evening of the 30th Napoleon sent Marshal Davoust with Compans' division, to follow Pojol in the direction of Ochmiana; at the same time marching Dessaix's division on the Lida road, in the wake of General Bordessoulle, and holding Morand's division in readiness to follow Marshal Davoust, if necessary. He urged on the movements of Prince Eugene, who, having halted after the passage of the Niemen, and receiving contradictory reports, had feared to encounter danger by advancing too rapidly; for he proposed that the troops of this Prince, ascending from Nowoi-Troki to Ochmiana, should also support, if needful, those of Marshal Davoust, or take their place in the line of battle beside Murat, so as to form the centre of the army and connect the right with the left wing. At the same time Napo-



leon ordered the cavalry under General Grouchy, which belonged to Eugene's division, to aid that of Bordessoulle, and to place itself, if necessary, at the command of Marshal Davoust, to whom also he gave the cuirassiers de Valence.

Marshal Davoust, it must be observed, could not, with the two divisions Compans and Dessaix, which were the only troops at his command on his departure from Wilna, envelope Bagration's army, which amounted to about sixty thousand men, and which some flying rumours had even raised to one hundred thousand ; but there remained on the extreme right the twenty-five thousand men under King Jerome which, debouching from Grodno and following Bagration in the rear, would assist in surrounding him or driving him into the Pinsk marshes.

By this combination of movements, therefore, retaining his troops of the left in observation on the Dwina, and hastily throwing a portion of his troops of the right on the Dnieper, whilst the centre, after having reposed at Nowoi-Troki, was preparing to place itself in line, Napoleon afforded to two-thirds of his army the time to rally, and prepared with only the remaining third to cut off Prince Bagration's retreat. In the meantime, whilst he entered with his usual ability into every administrative detail affecting the welfare of his troops, he also devoted his attention to Poland, which, indeed, demanded his earnest consideration, since he was now present there, appeared to have arrived for the sake of its interests, and since, moreover, the war could not have a successful or genuine result, in the attainment of which the situation of Poland had not been duly considered.

At this moment, in fact, the greatest agitation prevailed at Warsaw, and on the arrival of the news of the passage of the Niemen by four hundred thousand men under the great man of the age, the reconstitution of Poland was proclaimed, the concentration of all its provinces into a single state was decreed, and finally, one of those general confederations was determined on, by which the Poles had formerly defended their soil, and their independence. Since Napoleon was compelled, therefore, when advancing into the very heart of Russia to raise the grave question respecting the reconstitution of Poland, whose territory he was traversing and whose aid he required, he would have acted judiciously, perhaps, had he adopted a decided course of action, and attempted to effect its complete reconstitution. In this case, he would have placed at his disposal the whole body of the Polish army, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand men, have been able to form his right wing with it, and marched it towards Volhynia and Podolia. A right wing



thus formed, would have guarded his flanks more faithfully than the Austrian troops, and have been better calculated to rouse Volhynia to his aid ; and the adoption of this course would also have enabled him, instead of forming a separate government for Lithuania, to have immediately incorporated that territory with the general kingdom of Poland. He would thus have restored to Poland the sentiment of national existence, and would most probably have succeeded in exciting that national enthusiasm which was necessary to the accomplishment of his designs. But full of doubt, and unwilling to engage himself too far to the reconstitution of Poland, before he knew whether the Poles would make any genuine exertion to second his efforts, he hesitated now, as he had hesitated at many other critical moments of this campaign, yielding to a prudence which was perfectly out of place in the rash path on which he had entered, and which arose from his unwillingness to take a step which would alienate Austria, and make him appear to have resolved on war with Russia to the death. Having already divided the Polish army into several detachments, he renounced the idea of annexing Lithuania to Poland, and gave it a separate administration. And in the adoption of this course, he was influenced by an administrative reason of the most powerful nature. He was in the midst of Lithuania, about to carry on a campaign on its territory, and would probably have to occupy a position within it during one or two years ; and to have confided, therefore, its administration to a government situated more than a hundred leagues distant, and from the newness of its creation only partly acknowledged and partly efficacious, would have been to renounce the power of drawing from the resources of this province that aid which he needed, and which he was sure to obtain, were its administration in his own hands.

Napoleon gave, therefore, to Lithuania a distinct and independent government, and thus offered a severe menace against Russia, while he still refrained from any action which might be regarded as a declaration of implacable hostility. He formed a commission of seven members selected from the most considerable of the Lithuanian nobles, whom Russia had been unable to gain, or had neglected to attach to her interests ; and, persisting in connecting Poland with Saxony, he selected as a member of this commission, and at the same time governor of the province, Count Hogendorp, a Saxon officer, whom he had made his aide-de-camp. He divided Lithuania into four secondary governments, namely, Wilna, Grodno, Minsk, and Bialystok, each of which was to be governed by a commission consisting of three members, and

an intendant, who was to be subordinate to the governor-general. Executive agents were moreover established in each district, under the title of sous-préfets. The government of Lithuania thus organised, was charged with the care of the public property, with the collection of the taxes, the levying of troops, the maintenance and re-establishment of order throughout the country, the erection of magazines and hospitals, and, in short, with the duty of contributing that most efficacious means towards the reconstitution of Poland, which consisted in energetically aiding the French army. At the same time this Lithuanian government was authorised to join the great Polish confederation decreed at Warsaw.

The first act of the new government was to organise a public force, and it voted the creation of four regiments of infantry and five of cavalry, which were to number altogether twelve thousand men, and the cost of the first establishment of which could not be less than four millions of francs; a sum which the new government had no means of obtaining save from Napoleon, who refused to advance more than four hundred thousand francs. The Colonels were chosen from amongst the great land proprietors who had formerly served, and were attracted by the honours of high military rank, but Prince Poniatowski was required to supply the officers of a lower grade; the Lithuanian population, although already somewhat accustomed, as we have before said, to the Russian yoke, was nevertheless not without considerable enthusiasm for the cause of national liberty, whilst the nobles never ceased to dread the return of the Russians, and the decrees of exile and confiscation with which it would be accompanied. The rural population feared pillage and devastation. The inhabitants of the towns, with the exception of the Jews, were perfectly well disposed, but scanty in numbers, and much distressed; and all, whether poor or rich, had been equally ruined by the continental blockade and the sojourn of the Russian troops. Moreover, Napoleon and his subordinates only spoke to the Lithuanians with much reserve respecting Lithuanian independence, whilst they insisted with much vehemence on the subject of the sacrifices which it was necessary that Lithuania should make. These causes diminished the national zeal without destroying it, and much increased the difficulty attending the raising the new regiments.

Besides regiments of the line, the Lithuanian government also raised national guards and gardes-chasse, a species of mounted national guards, whose purpose was to keep the country in order, and who were of effectual service as guides to the French cavalry sent in pursuit of bandits and

marauders, who had unfortunately become very numerous, amounting to twenty-five or thirty thousand, and increased rather than lessened by the forced marches made by many of the corps of the French army. In fact so great had this evil become that one whole regiment of the first corps, the 33rd léger, (a Dutch regiment,) had, notwithstanding the good discipline enforced by Marshal Davoust, almost entirely disbanded itself, and pitilessly pillaged the canton of Lida, one of the most fertile in the country.

Another great inconvenience which had to be removed consisted in the dead bodies of men and horses which covered the roads, unburied, and infecting the air. In populous countries the inhabitants, for the sake of their own safety, hasten to bury the corpses of the dead; but in a country so thinly populated that the villages were five or six leagues distant from each other, this was a subject which was entirely neglected, and Napoleon was compelled, therefore, to make it one of the subjects to be attended to by the columns of cavalry sent to succour the country.

Napoleon also established from Königsberg to Wilna a series of military posts, comprising a commandant, a magazine of stores, a little hospital, relays of horses, and a parol charged with the maintenance of the security of the road and the interment of the dead.

Whilst occupied with these various cares, Napoleon had devoted his attention to a matter which was still more urgent; the supply of provisions and the conveyance of stores. One of his first steps in this matter was to order the masons who accompanied the troops to construct at Wilna, ovens capable of providing a hundred thousand rations a day; and as it unfortunately happened that bricks, which were the only available material in a country where stone was so rare, could only be procured at some distance from Wilna, and the artillery horses were too exhausted to perform the labour of this conveyance, Napoleon did not hesitate to require that the horses drawing the baggage waggons of the staff should be devoted to this service; and each day he went in person to see how the works proceeded.

The construction of ovens, however, was not the only difficulty which had to be overcome before subsistence for the troops could be secured at Wilna. Grain, indeed, was sufficiently abundant, for the Russians had not always time to destroy it, but they had taken particular pains to destroy the mills, and it was necessary to repair them before the grain in our possession could be converted into flour. In the meantime Napoleon took care to create great magazines at Kowno, at Wilna, and at all the towns which fell into his



possession, determining to make Lithuania contribute large quantities of all sorts of grain and forage.

The intervention of Napoleon's active will was also demanded to procure the supply of the means of transport necessary to the execution of these various plans. The first convoys, under the direction of Colonel Baste, had succeeded, to Napoleon's great delight, in traversing the distance from Dantzic to Kowno; but there still remained to be traversed the sinuous course of the Wilia from Kowno to Wilna, which would occupy twenty days, although it was a fifth or a sixth shorter than the distance from Dantzic to Kowno, which had occupied no longer. Napoleon, therefore, determined to attempt to abridge this navigation, and if he could not succeed in that, to renounce it for a great land transport enterprise, which he proposed to entrust to a company of Polish Jews.

The new organisation of the baggage train had not succeeded as well as had been expected, and there had been lost between the Elbe and the Niemen one half of the waggons, a third of the horses, and a fourth of the men. Napoleon gave orders, therefore, that the want of horses should be supplied by oxen, and the horses of the country; but these orders were, unfortunately, more easily given than executed, for it was a very difficult matter to procure yokes with which to harness the oxen; iron, with which to shoe them; and herds to drive them.

In the meantime, actual experience rendered Napoleon more conscious of the difficulties attending the march of 600,000 men into a distant country; but it did not, as yet, diminish his sense of power. Within the space of a few days he had, in fact, obtained possession of Lithuania, and cut in two the Russian army; and in spite of the obstacles arising from the nature of the ground which had to be traversed, the climate, and the long distances to be passed over, he hoped that his skilful manœuvres would have results worthy of his policy and his glory. Whilst, therefore, he received Alexander's envoy, M. de Balachoff, with perfect politeness, he resolved to reject the propositions of which he was the bearer. And, indeed, neither Alexander nor Napoleon could now spare time for negotiations, and the question between them had reached a state in which it could only be resolved by the sword. The passage of the Niemen had rendered it beneath the dignity of either emperor to negotiate; and, moreover, Napoleon could not, in the month of July—when scarcely three months remained for active operations—grant time for discussion, which might be employed by the Russians in throwing upon the Vistula the troops engaged in the Turkish



war, or in uniting the troops under Bagration with those of Barclay de Tolly. To have refrained from commencing the war, would doubtless have been the best course, but when it had been once commenced, it was impossible to halt at Wilna.

Napoleon received M. de Balachoff at first with much politeness, and listened to him with gracious attention when he declared his master's astonishment at finding his territory invaded without any previous declaration of war, on the two-fold and disingenuous pretext of the demand made for his passports by Prince Kourakin; and that the evacuation of the Prussian territory had been demanded as an indispensable preliminary to all negotiation. Napoleon listened to all that was advanced by the envoy with the patience of a man who is perfectly reliant on his strength, and is thoroughly determined on his course of actions; but he replied that it was now too late to enter upon negotiations, and that it was impossible that he should recross the Niemen. He repeated his usual arguments, that he had only armed in reply to armaments previously made by Russia, and that through the whole course of his preparations for war he had remained willing to negotiate; and complained that the demand made for his passports by M. de Kourakin, and the attempt to impose upon the French a dishonourable preliminary condition, and the refusal of M. de Lauriston's demand for the honour of an interview with the Emperor Alexander, had destroyed the last chance of an amicable arrangement of the differences between the two nations, and induced him, Napoleon, to carry the French army beyond the Niemen.

M. de Balachoff was not sufficiently well acquainted with the actual facts to attempt to reply to these assertions by the utterance of the simple truth, and contented himself, therefore, with repeating that his master was earnestly desirous for peace; and being free, as yet, from any engagement with other powers, was always ready to conclude it on the conditions which had, since 1807, rendered the relations between the two countries so entirely satisfactory. "You are free as yet, I believe," said Napoleon in reply to these assertions, "from any alliance with the English, but the union will speedily take place; a single courier will suffice to bring about a good understanding between you, and tie the knots of a new alliance. Your Emperor has long displayed a leaning towards England, and I have long observed it. But oh! how glorious would have been his reign had he only consented to remain on good terms with me! I had given him Finland, and the promise I had made to him of Moldavia and Wallachia was speedily about to be realised, when

suddenly he placed himself amidst the ranks of my enemies, turning against me the arms which he had intended to employ against the Turks, and gaining only the certainty that he will never possess either Moldavia or Wallachia. . . . It is even said," added Napoleon in the manner of an interrogation, "that you have signed a peace with the Turks, the terms of which do not grant you these provinces?" M. de Balachoff replied in the affirmative; and, under the influence of deep but concealed emotion, Napoleon continued, "Your master does not possess, then, those fine provinces which he might so readily have added to his empire, and which would have extended it in the course of a single reign from the gulf of Bothnia to the mouths of the Danube! An alliance with me would have been more fruitful in great results than the reign of Catherine the Great; and would have enabled Russia to share with me the glory of vanquishing the English, already reduced to the last extremities. And ah! how glorious in that case would Alexander's reign have been! But he has preferred to ally himself with my enemies, and to associate himself with a Stein, an Armfeld, a Wintzingerode, and a Benningsen! The first, a fugitive from his country; the second, an intriguing debauché; the third, a rebellious French subject; and the fourth, although possessed of rather greater military qualifications than the others, still very incapable, having shown himself thoroughly incompetent in 1807, and inevitably recalling to his master's mind the most horrible recollections. Barclay de Tolly, indeed, is said to be possessed of higher talents than these men, but it is difficult to believe it after having witnessed the first movements of your troops. Bagration is your only true soldier, and is, in fact, experienced, keen sighted, and decided in action. . . . But what course can your master pursue in the midst of this mob which will compromise him and lay upon him the blame of all their own errors! A sovereign should never be present with his army, save when acting as its general, but should, on the contrary, keep at such a distance as to leave the responsible general at liberty to pursue his own measures. You perceive what have been the results of your operations during the eight days which the campaign has now lasted? You have lost Wilna, your army has been cut in two, and chased from the Polish provinces. Your troops murmur at these things, and have good reason to do so. Again, I know the exact amount of your strength, I have taken as exact account of your battalions as of my own, and I know that you have only two hundred thousand men with which to oppose me, who come at the head of three times as many. As for your allies—the Turks will be of no

use to you, for they are good for nothing; and they have shown that this is so in signing a peace with you; and the Swedes, on their side, are destined to be at the will of extravagant men. They have got rid of one foolish king and taken another still more foolish; and indeed, it is necessary to be a fool before one can be at the same time a Swede and a Russian ally. And what, at the most, do all your allies amount to? What can they do for you? And how great is the difference between them and my allies the Poles, who are eighty thousand strong, fight for me with ardour, and will speedily form an army of two hundred thousand men! I am about to snatch from you the Polish provinces; I will deprive the kinsmen of your family of all that remains in their possession in Germany, and send them back to you dis-crowned and kingdomless. If Prussia become involved with you, I will blot her from the map of Germany, and give you a sworn enemy in her place. I will drive you back beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, and re-establish against you a barrier which Europe has blindly and culpably permitted to be broken down.—These are the things which you will have gained by deserting my alliance, in the place of the glorious reign your master might have enjoyed by remaining faithful to it.”

M de Balachoff, who could scarcely restrain his indignation whilst listening to these words, nevertheless answered respectfully, that whilst fully recognising the bravery of the French armies and the skill with which their movements were conducted, Russia did not yet despair of the result of the struggle in which she was engaged with them; that she was determined to make a most energetic, a desperate resistance, and that there could be little doubt that God would favour her exertions in a war in which she had justice on her side, and which she had unwillingly engaged in. And here the conversation recurring to the point at which it had been commenced was abruptly broken off, and Napoleon quitted M. de Balachoff to mount his horse, after having invited him to dine with him.

At his table the Emperor Napoleon behaved towards M. de Balachoff with much kindness, but at the same time treated him with a familiarity which was somewhat distressing, and frequently compelled the envoy to defend his sovereign and his nation. At length, in the course of conversation, Napoleon spoke of the large number of convents to be found in Poland and Russia, and declared that they were melancholy symptoms of a low state of civilisation; and M. de Balachoff replied that every country has its peculiar institutions, and that what is very suitable for one is ill adap-

ted to another. But when Napoleon persisted that the prosperity of convents was not so much a question of place as time, and that they were wholly unsuited to the present age, M. de Balachoff, hardly pushed, replied that indeed the religious spirit had disappeared from almost the whole of Europe, but that it still existed in two countries—Spain and Russia. This was an allusion to the resistance he encountered in the Peninsula, and to the resistance he might possibly meet with elsewhere, which somewhat disconcerted Napoleon, although he was usually as ready in conversation as in war, and he was at a loss for an answer. All the sensible persons who were present at this interview, much regretted the tone adopted towards the Russian envoy, and Napoleon himself became, at length, so far sensible of its injudicious nature, that at the conclusion of the repast, he took M. de Balachoff aside, and addressed him in a more serious and worthy manner, declaring that he was ready to halt and to negotiate, on condition that he should be permitted to retain possession of Lithuania, at least during the negotiations; and that he was ready to make peace on condition that Russia should sincerely and unreservedly co-operate with him against England; but that it would be simple folly for him, under any other circumstances, to halt, and lose the two months which still remained to him for the execution of the plans from which he hoped to obtain such great results. At the same time, he assured M. de Balachoff of his personal regard for the Emperor Alexander, and dismissed him with the utmost graciousness.

This prudent course, however, was adopted too late, and M. de Balachoff had to relate a great deal which could not but wound Alexander most deeply, and convert a political quarrel into a personal one. Napoleon was, subsequently, to experience that this was the case; and, indeed, although most capable of pleasing when he took the trouble to do so, the possession of supreme power had rendered him so irritable and incapable of bearing contradiction, that he could no longer safely attempt to hold diplomatic interviews. His famous conversation with Lord Whitworth, in 1803, shows that this was a fault of long standing; but his conduct during his interviews with Prince Kourakin and M. de Balachoff, show that this fault had very greatly increased under the influence of uninterrupted success.

Whilst Napoleon was at Wilna, occupied with the numerous cares which we have enumerated, the Russian and French armies continued their movements. The six corps of infantry and the two corps of reserve cavalry of General Barclay de Tolly, which were marching upon the Dwina, were the most



advanced, and opposite our left, were pursuing a direct course, whilst the others situated on our right, and having to execute a circular movement around Wilna, were compelled to use the utmost expedition to avoid being cut off by Marshal Davoust. The outcry against the plans attributed to General Pfuhl, and the division of the Russian troops into two armies, had increased in violence amongst the Russian staff; and as General Pfuhl could only meet it with outbursts of chagrin, or an assumption of the dissatisfied silence of an unrecognised genius, the Emperor Alexander had been compelled to yield to the spirit of opposition which had arisen against his views, and to send directions to Prince Bagration to march in all haste upon Minsk, so as to be in a position to join the principal army as soon as it should be considered necessary.

The three corps of Barclay de Tolly which were situated on our left, those under Wittgenstein and Bagowouth and the Guard, which had originally been at Rossiena, at Wilkomir, and at Wilna, had withdrawn in the direction of Drissa, without encountering any obstacle, and followed only by Marshals Macdonald, Oudinot, and Ney. The corps of Touczkoff and Schouvaloff, posted at Nowoi-Troki and Olkeniky respectively, and both, as regarded us, on the right of the Wilna, having commenced their march on the 27th of June, on the eve of the day of our entrance into Wilna, had had time to retreat and to escape from the pursuit of our troops; with the exception, however, of the rear guard of Schouvaloff's corps, which having been unable to pass in time the Ochmiana route, which was that followed by Marshal Davoust, had remained between Davoust's corps and the Niemen, wandering here and there, and endeavouring to join the Hetman Platow in order to escape with him to Bagration. Finally, the sixth corps under General Doctoroff, and the second of General Korff's cavalry, which were advanced farther than the others on the right, being posted at Lida, and had a longer circuit to traverse so as to reach the other side of Wilna, had commenced their march immediately on the receipt of the orders above mentioned, and proceeded without pause to Ochmiana and Smorgoni. On the 29th they passed the Wilna route at Minsk; on the 30th, arrived at Donachewo, and on the 1st of July resumed their march to join the great army under Barclay de Tolly.

Such was the state of affairs on the 1st of July; when there only remained on our right some detachments of Doctoroff's corps, the rear guard of Schouvaloff's corps, and the eight or ten thousand Cossacks under the Hetman Platow; all of which had only the one course open to them, namely,

to fall back upon Bagration, following the course of the Niemen.

In the meantime, Marshal Davoust having advanced on the 2nd and 3rd of July as far as Valosjin, half way from Wilna to Minsk, by sifting, as his experience well enabled him, the reports received from prisoners, country-people, and *cures*, perceived very clearly that a corps of the enemy (that under Doctoroff,) had escaped him on his left, and that on his right rear-guards of infantry and cavalry, cut off from the several corps, wandered amongst the forests, in which it might be possible to enclose and take them, by means of advancing upon Bagration; of whose force Marshal Davoust had no certain information, but supposed it, as was really the case, to amount to about sixty thousand men, of whom forty thousand were infantry.

In so thickly wooded a country, so great a master of defensive tactics as Marshal Davoust did not fear to meet forty thousand Russian infantry, with the twenty thousand at his disposal, consisting of the division Compans, which were under his own immediate command on the Ochimana route, and the division Dessaix, which was on the Lida route, and which he could at any time bring to his side by a transverse movement. In addition to these twenty thousand infantry, he had ten thousand cavalry, consisting of the hussars and chasseurs of General's Pajol and Bordessoulle, the Valentian cuirassiers detached from the corps of Nansouty, and Grouchy's entire corps, temporarily separated from Prince Eugene's troops, and thrown by Napoleon in the direction of Grodno, for the purpose of establishing a communication with King Jerome. But in such a country as that in which he now had to operate, Marshal Davoust would certainly have preferred three or four thousand infantry to the most splendid cavalry.

Marshal Davoust advanced, therefore, upon Minsk, without any fear of Bagration, and even determined, on the contrary, to interrupt his march, and prevent him from gaining the Dnieper, although he could not indulge in the idea that he should be able to envelope and take him with so few troops. To interrupt his march, however, was a matter of great importance, since it would force him to redescend towards the marshes of Pinsk, and there would be a chance, should King Jerome, who had succeeded in passing the Niemen at Grodno, advance rapidly with his seventy or seventy-five thousand men, of making prisoners of the second Russian army. Marshal Davoust informed Napoleon of the circumstances of his position, and of his resolution to advance straight to Minsk, and demanded such

support as he could afford him. At the same time he wrote to King Jerome to hasten his advance in the direction of Ivié, or Volosjin, points at which it would effect the junction from which such happy results were to be expected.

The brave Marshal advanced on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of July from Volosjin towards Minsk; but perceiving that as he approached the latter the dangers which surrounded him increased, as did also the distance which separated him from his reinforcements, he multiplied his reconnaissances, relaxed his march, and halted a day and a half between Volosjin and Minsk, for the purpose of bringing up the division Dessaix and Grouchy's cavalry, that he might enter Minsk at the head of his united forces.

The demands for assistance sent to Napoleon by Marshal Davoust were extremely reasonable; for, with two additional divisions the latter would have been able to have marched straight forward, without anxiety respecting his junction with King Jerome, to have advanced uninterruptedly to Minsk, from Minsk to the Berezina, from the Berezina to the Dnieper, and have been able, thus, to cut off Prince Bagration, who, by the simultaneous arrival of King Jerome, would have been completely surrounded, and probably have endured the same fate as that suffered by General Mack at Wilna. To have secured these advantages, however, it was necessary that Marshal Davoust should have made rapid marches, and have been sufficiently strong to have dispensed with those precautions which render rapid marches impossible.

Napoleon, whose attention was, however, unfortunately, occupied by too many combinations, neglected these considerations, and considering that the junction of Marshal Davoust with the King of Westphalia was certain and would as certainly result in the envelopement or overthrow of Bagration's troops, devoted his attention to a combination worthy of his gigantic intellect, and which, forcing Barclay de Tolly to succumb, whilst Bagration was vanquished by Davoust and Jerome, would at once put an end to the whole war. Halting ten days at Wilna for the purpose of rallying his troops and re-organising his baggage train, he planned to set out on the 9th of July, directing his march upon the Dwina, and, whilst Oudinot and Ney should occupy the attention of Barclay de Tolly with about sixty thousand men, to manœuvre behind them, advancing to the right with Davoust's three remaining divisions, the guard, the troops under Prince Eugene, and Murat's cavalry, with the purpose of suddenly crossing the Dwina on the enemy's left, and surrounding the great Russian army in the Drissa camp;

cutting off simultaneously the St. Petersburg and Moscow routes, and leaving to the Russians no alternative but to lay down their arms. No wiser nor more formidable plan could have been devised to meet the Russian's indefinite plan of retreat, and, considering Napoleon's skill in manœuvring in front of the enemy, all the chances of success were in his favour.

The forces at Napoleon's disposal for the execution of this plan were almost two hundred thousand of his best troops, and, therefore, should he employ sixty thousand to mask his movement, he would have one hundred and forty thousand remaining with whom to cross the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly, to surround and to destroy him.

Napoleon's only fault in forming this plan was that he attempted to accomplish too many purposes at once. In the meantime, being unwilling to weaken the three first divisions of the first corps, the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which he held in higher estimation than even the guard itself, but also anxious to give Marshal Davoust such a reinforcement as would enable him to maintain his position until King Jerome should have joined him, he detached from the guard the division Clarapède, composed of the famous regiments of the Vistula, and the *Lanciers rouges* under General Colbert. Simultaneously with the despatch of this reinforcement, which only amounted to about six thousand men, but was valuable on account of the excellence of the troops of which it was composed, Napoleon sent to urge King Jerome to conduct his marches with as much energy as possible, and at the same time made preparations to commence on the 9th or 10th of July the decisive operations which he meditated against Barclay de Tolly.

Marshal Davoust, whose troops, including the reinforcements, amounted to twenty-four thousand infantry and eleven thousand cavalry, and who knew that he was supported on his left by the presence of Prince Eugene, no longer felt any anxiety as to the Russian troops which he might meet in his advance. Marching eastward, with a slight deviation to the south, he had the Niemen (which after flowing northwards from Grodno to Kowno, suddenly, above Grodno, takes an entirely different direction, flowing from east to west) on his right, and was separated by the numerous sinuosities of its course from Prince Bagration and King Jerome. Having about thirty-five thousand troops at his command, he did not hesitate to advance, and entered Minsk on the evening of the 8th of July with a simple advanced guard; obtaining possession by means of the rapidity of his march—which left the Cossacks no time to destroy them—of large quantities



of most serviceable stores, and finding in the city considerable zeal for Polish independence.

These circumstances were of the greatest advantage to Marshal Davoust, whose corps had marched without halting from Kowno to Wilna, from Wilna to Minsk, without having had two whole days of repose since the 24th of June, and which had fallen into a state of the greatest disorder, a third of the troops having fallen out of the ranks, the horses being exhausted, and the 33rd leger, a Dutch regiment, having disbanded and devoted itself to pillage. The Marshal took immediate measures to remedy this state of things, addressed the troops, distributed prizes and rewards to those who deserved them, threatened to disband the 33rd should it not behave better in future, and had shot a certain number of men who had pillaged shops in Minsk. He procured ten days rations from the flour which he found in the town, provided the horses with oats, placed his troops in proper order to undertake new marches, and, after having been only two days in the town, was in a position to have continued his operations, had not his position become one of greater uncertainty, and rendered it necessary that he should obtain more precise information before advancing any further. When once he had arrived at Minsk, it was open to him to have reached by a slight further advance, the Beresina, and by inclining a little to the right, to have arrived under the walls of Bobruisk, a strong place commanding the passage of that river, or, by advancing straight forward, to have reached the banks of the Dnieper at Mohilew. Which of these courses it would be the best to pursue, depended upon the movements which should have been made by Prince Bagration, who, according to the confused rumours which could be collected, appeared to have advanced as far as the Niemen, towards Nikolajef, and then, after having rallied the troops of Dorokoff and Platow, to have retreated towards the little town of Neswij, on the road from Grodno to Bobruisk, which was naturally the road to be followed by the army of the Dnieper. In this state of circumstances a junction with King Jerome would enable our troops to stop Bagration at Bobruisk itself and should this prince be checked by Davoust at the passage of the Beresina, whilst Jerome should assail him in the rear, he might be surrounded in such a manner that he would only be able to retreat into the Pinsk marshes. By advancing, on the other hand, as far as the Dnieper, to intercept his march at Mohilew, the uncertainty of success increased with the distance ; since, indeed, the circle within which it would then be attempted to surround him, would be increased, and there would be left open more points for his escape. Marshal

Davoust determined, therefore, to halt a day or two for the purpose of obtaining information, and making preparations for his march upon Ighoumen, a point at which he would be equally near to Mohilew and Bobruisk.

In the meantime, as is usual with persons who wait, Marshal Davoust was excessively irritated at the slowness of King Jerome's movements, forgetting, in his own embarrassments the embarrassments which might have surrounded the path of the latter; to whose movements at and since the passage of the Niemen we may now direct our attention.

The Polish and Westphalian troops, preceded by the cavalry corps of General Latour-Maubourg, having set out from the environs of Pultusk, and been compelled to follow the Ostrolenka and Goniondz route, for the purpose of reaching Grodno, across a country so poor that they had to carry with them everything they required, and along roads on which the conveyances of heavy burdens was a matter of the greatest labour, had had extreme difficulty in reaching the Niemen about the latter end of June. At the same time General Reynier with the Saxons had advanced on the right to debouch by Bialystok, and the Prince of Schwarzenburg with about thirty thousand Austrians had arrived from Galicia at Brezesc-Litowsky.

Pressed by the reiterated orders of Napoleon King Jerome, who had placed at the head of his column the excellent troops under Prince Poniatowski, had sacrificed many horses and left many stragglers behind him in pursuit of his object of reaching Grodno as speedily as possible. On the 28th of June the Polish light horse, animated with the utmost fury against the Russians, had reached this town, immediately drove back Platow's Cossacks and made preparations for effecting the passage of the river, aided by the inhabitants, whom the presence of their compatriots and the news of the reconstitution of Poland had filled with enthusiasm. On the following day they had crossed the river and, without taking any repose, had proceeded by the Lida route in conformity with the orders of the staff general, which directed them to form a junction with Prince Eugene who, as we have already seen, had effected the passage of the stream at Prenn.

On the following day, the 30th of June, King Jerome arrived, and immediately devoted his attention to making preparations for provisioning his troops, who were much harassed and had not been able to bring up their baggage train, since the great storm of the 29th of June, which had burst over almost the whole of Poland, had rendered the roads impracticable and slain many of the horses. Refusing to

allow his exertions to be interrupted by the demonstrations of joy and homage which the inhabitants, delighted at the news of the independence of Poland and the presence of a brother of Napoleon, lavished upon him, he made the greatest exertions to procure the bread rations for his troops, of which they stood in so much need.

In the meantime the most unjust and humiliating letters arrived from Napoleon, accusing Jerome of dilatoriness, want of zeal, and indulgence in pleasure. It is true that King Jerome, who was not able to discern by experience, like that of Marshal Davoust, the real state of affairs through the midst of popular rumours, had marched with a certain degree of apprehension of what he might encounter; but he had been most completely obedient to his brother's orders, losing not a single day or hour, and constantly urging General Reynier, who advanced parallel with him by Bialystok and Slonim to join as speedily as possible the principal column. Prince Bagration, however, was six or seven marches in advance, and it was not easy to come up with him. The Russian General, in fact, having set out on the 28th of June from Wolkowisk in accordance with the first order directing him to regain the banks of the Dnieper, had received, *en route*, a second, which had directed him to draw near Barclay de Tolly in his movement of retreat, and he had then marched upon Nikolajef, in order to cross the Niemen there, and to perform that circular movement around Wilna which had saved Doctoroff. At this place he had met with Dorokoff and Platow, and learning from them that Davoust was on their track, had, instead of ascending northwards, descended to the south, with the purpose of marching by Nowogrodek, Mir, and Neswij, upon Bobruisk. At Neswij he halted two days to refresh his troops, which were worn out with fatigue and the extreme heat of the weather, but as he was, nevertheless, quite ready to resume his march on the 10th of July, it was necessary that Jerome should arrive there by that time, if he was to come up with him; and this was an impossibility, since the distance from Grodno to Neswij, through Nowogrodek, was almost fifty-six leagues; and the King of Westphalia, should he even march seven leagues a day during eight days, which would be excessive toil for such roads and in the midst of the heats of July, could not arrive at Neswij before the 12th.

Harassed by his brother's letters, the King of Westphalia arrived at Nowogrodek on the 10th of July, and was then fourteen leagues from Bagration, who was at Neswij, and twenty from Davoust, who was at Minsk. As he had advanced, the less enormous had become the proportions as-



cribed to Bagration's army, which was now said to amount only to sixty thousand men ; but this was still a very large force to have to meet with the forty-five thousand Polish and Westphalian troops who alone were at his command, the Saxons being too far off to be of immediate service.

On the same day, the 10th of July, King Jerome's light cavalry having advanced beyond Nowogrodek, on the Mir route, fell in with Prince Bagration's rear guard, consisting of six thousand Cossacks, two thousand regular cavalry, and two thousand light infantry. The ardour of our cavalry, consisting of chasseurs and Polish lancers, could not be restrained ; and although only amounting to three thousand men, boldly engaged ten thousand of the enemy's troops, sustaining forty charges and losing five hundred of their number.

Such had been King Jerome's proceedings up to the 11th of July. In the meantime, Marshal Davoust, between whom and Jerome there had been no communications, from the fact of their making their reconnaissances in different directions, and who had been at Minsk since the 5th of July, became filled with an impatience which he expressed to Napoleon, and the latter in his turn, losing all mastery over his temper, sent an order to his brother to place himself under the commands of Marshal Davoust as soon as the junction between them should have taken place ; a measure, which, amounting only to the subjection of a young prince to an old and experienced warrior, would have been very natural at the commencement of the campaign, but which, adopted suddenly and as a punishment, would very probably produce most disastrous misunderstandings, and prevent the attainment of the results which it was intended to insure.

In fact, without any change of command, had his Generals acted in zealous concert with each other, Napoleon's combinations might have been thoroughly executed ; for Jerome, who on the 13th reached Neswij, from whence he could easily arrive at Bobruisk on the 17th, learning that Bagration, who was on the road to Bobruisk, could not reach it before the 16th, and would then require two days in which to effect the passage of the Beresina with all his materiel ; and that Davoust, whose advanced guard was near Ighoumen, could reach Bobruisk in three days, in which case, Marshal Davoust debouching upon Bobruisk by the left of the Beresina with thirty-five thousand troops, and Jerome presenting himself on the right bank with forty-five thousand, it would be very possible to inflict a most severe blow on Bagration's army ;—becoming acquainted with these circumstances, King Jerome communicated them to Marshal Davoust, urging him to march



upon Bobruisk, as the means of obtaining the most splendid results.

When Davoust, who had remained at Minsk until the 12th, not daring to advance since he had only two French infantry divisions, received Jerome's letter, he no longer hesitated to march, and determined to set out on the following day for Ighoumen. At the same time being anxious that the troops which were about to form a junction, should the more certainly act in concert, and not being wholly displeased to reduce to a subordinate position a young prince with whom he had been more than once discontented during his sojourn on the Elbe, he communicated to him Napoleon's appointment of himself to the supreme command of the forces when they should have effected a junction, and at once adopting the position of commander in chief, ordered Jerome to march by Neswij and Slouck upon Bobruisk, whilst he himself should advance thither by Ighoumen. In the same letter he pointed out some cross routes, by which their light cavalry might form a link between their several corps.

The Marshal's letter reached Jerome on the 14th of July, and filled him with the most violent indignation; for he regarded this subjection to the commander of the 1st corps as a species of punishment, and the most profound humiliation; and yielding to these feelings he resolved, not to oppose Napoleon's will, but to resign his command—a resolution which was, unfortunately, the most disastrous for his brother's plans which he could possibly have taken. He committed to the chief of his staff, General Marchand, the command of his troops until the junction with Marshal Davoust should have been effected, and retired towards Mir and Nowogrodek, to await there the commands of the Emperor, and intending to return to his states should they not be in conformity with his ideas of his own dignity.

An officer bearing information of this resolution of the young prince reached Marshal Davoust on the 15th, at Ighoumen; and the Marshal failed on this occasion to act with his usual firmness, for instead of using the command—which he had seized somewhat prematurely—with the vigour demanded by circumstances, he was frightened at the idea of having offended a king, brother of the Emperor, and wrote to him a letter earnestly persuading him to remain at the head of the Polish and Westphalian troops under his, Davoust's, superior command, declaring that the adoption of this course was necessary for the Emperor's welfare. In the meantime, keeping his eye on Bobruisk, he also extended his observations beyond it, watching the course of events on

the other side of the Beresina, and making himself certain that the enemy was not preparing to cross it, in which case he would have hastened to advance upon Mohilew. He had already sent Grouchy's cavalry to Borisow to seize this town, its bridge across the Beresina, and its magazines ; but they had only succeeded in securing the bridge. He had also thrown several bridges across the Beresina, especially in the neighbourhood of Iakzitey, and had marched his forces thither, so as to be at the same time nearer to both Bobruisk and Mohilew.

When Davoust's letter arrived at Neswij, King Jerome was no longer there, and he did not receive it until the 17th, on the Nowogrodek road ; he then sent a reply, which was a repetition of his previously expressed resolution, and which could not reach the Marshal until the 18th or 19th. And thus Napoleon's grand combination was rendered abortive, for it was necessary for its accomplishment, that both Davoust's and Jerome's troops should be under Bobruisk on the 17th, and that was no longer possible. All that could now be done, the opportunity of stopping and surrounding Bagration on the Beresina having been lost, was to outstrip him in the march upon the Dnieper, with the object of effecting the occupation of Mohilew. But the great results which were to be expected from the former measure were no longer to be hoped. Had Prince Bagration been checked on the Beresina, the only retreat open to him would have been in the direction of Mozyr and the Pinsk marshes, where he might have been readily assailed, surrounded, and taken. By being checked on the Dnieper, he would be prevented, indeed, from passing by Mohilew, but he would be able to descend upon Staroi-Bychow, and even if he should be checked in this latter direction, he would still be in a position to descend upon Rogaczew.

In the meantime Marshal Davoust, having received certain information respecting some of the enemy's movements beyond the Beresina resolved, without waiting for Jerome's reply, to give up the plan of a combined movement upon Bobruisk, and to march upon Mohilew, in order to secure, at least, some of the expected results. Having marched on the 16th some of his troops by Iakzitey, beyond the Beresina, he himself, on the 17th, followed with the remainder of his corps d'armée, and advanced by Pogost on the Dnieper, in the direction of Mohilew. He received on his road the letters by which King Jerome announced his definitive resolution, and he at once took upon himself the direction of the troops which had thus come under his command ; ordering the Westphalians to proceed by Ouzda, Dukora, and Bori-

sow to Orscha, that they might have a position on the Dnieper between himself and the grand army, which he knew to be on its march towards the upper Dwina; and, as this movement could not be completed until the lapse of eight or ten days, directing Grouchy's cavalry upon Orscha, so as to establish the connection with the grand army as soon as possible. At the same time he marched the Polish corps, on which he chiefly relied, towards Mohilew, by Ouzda, Dukora, and Ighoumen; for, if he could bring up this corps in time, he would have at his command some fifty and odd thousand men; a force quite sufficient to vanquish the troops under Bagration. Latour-Maubourg's cavalry he devoted to the task of investing Bobruisk, whilst they should at the same time retain a position on the Beresina, and maintain a connection with Mohilew. The Saxons, and, to the right of the Saxons, the Austrians, remained to be disposed of, and we shall find that they were employed in conformity with Napoleon's orders.

Thus of the combination of movements which Napoleon had devised for the purpose of encircling and capturing Bagration's troops, there only remained the chance of checking them at Mohilew, compelling them to pass the Dnieper below it, and thus delaying, but by no means rendering altogether impossible, his junction with Barclay de Tolly.

When Napoleon became informed of the frustration of his scheme, he was excessively irritated against both Marshal Davoust and King Jerome, and especially against the latter. His accusation against Davoust being that he assumed the command of the two armies before the junction between them had been actually effected, and that he had not exercised the command thus assumed with sufficient vigour; whilst he reproached King Jerome with having lost him the results which should have been derived from one of his best manœuvres.

Although he could no longer hope for the success of his manœuvres against the army of the Dnieper, he still confidently expected that Marshal Davoust would drive Bagration upon the Dnieper below Mohilew at least; and that the second Russian army would be compelled to make a long detour, and thus be prevented from assisting the army under Barclay de Tolly. He ordered Marshal Davoust, therefore, firmly to maintain his position at Mohilew, and directed the Prince of Schwarzenberg to draw near the grand army with the Austrian corps, traversing Lithuania from south to north by Proujany, Slonim, and Minsk, replacing them with the Saxons on the upper course of the Bug, the frontier of Volhynia, and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

These measures having been taken, he directed his atten-



tion to his other measure, which was even more important than that of which we have just narrated the failure, since, if he should succeed in advancing with the greater portion of his forces in front of the camp of Drissa, in outstripping Barclay de Tolly, and in cutting him off from both Moscow and St. Petersburg, he would render impossible the execution of the project conceived by the Russians of an indefinite retreat, or at least reduce them to attempting its execution with mere disorganised wrecks of armies.

With regard to this grand movement, the halt made at Wilna was much to be regretted ; but it had, nevertheless, been absolutely necessary for the purpose of checking desertion, bringing up the artillery which remained in the rear, reorganising the baggage train, preparing provisions, and bringing up the pontoon equipages ; and every hour of the eighteen days, during which it lasted, was zealously devoted to the preparations required by these important matters. In the meantime, news arrived at Wilna from all parts of the world, leaving no doubt on the one hand that the Turks had concluded peace with Russia, and that Bernadotte had also given in his adhesion to the same power. This news which could not but lead Napoleon to expect the arrival, on his right, of the Russian armies of Tarmasoff and Tchitchakoff, and the probable descent of Swedish troops on his rear, was, however, counterbalanced by favourable news from England and America, which announced the assassination of Mr. Percival, a total change in British policy, and the certainty of a declaration of war between Great Britain and America. But Napoleon very properly allowed himself to be but little affected by news which did not immediately relate to the scene of action, and determined to trust the fortune of the war to the grand operations which he was about to undertake. He had already sent forward the light cavalry of the Guard, under General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, to prepare the way for the remainder of the army, and had followed it with the young Guard under Martin, the old Guard under Lefebvre ; directing the first to proceed to Lowaritsky, Michælsky, the second by Swenziany and Postavy, and both to make for Gloubakoe, where Napoleon intended to fix his head quarters in front of the Dwina, between Drissa and Polotsk. In the rear of these troops he had dispatched the Guard's artillery reserve, which he regarded as particularly serviceable in actual battle, and recommended that it should be slowly carried forward so that the horses might not be worn out. On the same point, also, but somewhat to the left, and behind Murat, he directed the three divisions, Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which he had kept under his own imme-



diate command, for the execution of the more difficult part of his manœuvre, which would be close to the enemy, at the point where it would be necessary to turn them for the purpose of surrounding them. At the same time, he had caused Ney, Oudinot, and Macdonald, to execute a movement from left to right; carrying Ney from Maliatoui to Widzony, Oudinot from Avanta to Binchononi, and Macdonald from Rossiena to Poinwieri; whilst on his right, he had set Prince Eugene's troops in motion from Nowoi-Troki to Ochmiana, Smorgoni and Wileika, intending that they should form his right wing and communicate with Marshal Davoust by means of Grouchy's cavalry.

Before leaving Wilna, Napoleon made every arrangement for the due administration of all parts of the service during his absence; and resolved to leave there the Duke of Bassano with authority to carry on, not only diplomatic, but also administrative and military correspondence, to communicate to each chief of a corps what it might be suitable that he should know, and even to give orders with respect to all matters relating to the victualling of the army.

At the same time he concluded an agreement with the Polish Jews, for the establishment of a transport service from Kowno to Wilna; for the navigation of the Wilia had been found to be perfectly impracticable, and it had been resolved to employ a land transport service instead. And, finally, desiring that the army of reserve should make a movement corresponding to that which was about to be made by the army in the field, he ordered Marshal Victor, who commanded the 9th corps at Berlin, to advance upon Dantzic, and Marshal Angereau, who commanded the 11th corps, composed of fourth battalions and regiments of refractory recruits, to replace the Duke de Bellune at Berlin; directing that these latter troops should be replaced on the frontiers of France by the cohorts whose organisation he had ordered before quitting Paris. Wilna itself, which now contained ovens capable of furnishing a hundred thousand rations, hospitals] capable of receiving six thousand patients, and officers ready to recruit or reorganise the stragglers who might be brought in by the columns mobile, he arranged should be garrisoned by a garrison mobile, consisting of troops on their march, of whom there would generally be present there not less than twenty thousand.

Napoleon resolved to set out on the night of the 16th of July; but before his departure he could not fail to receive the representations of the Polish Diet, of which there had been an extraordinary assembly at Warsaw. It will be remembered that M. de Pradt, Archbishop of Malines, was sent to

Warsaw, in the place of M. de Talleyrand, for the purpose of exciting and directing Polish enthusiasm. He was a man quite incapable of judicious action in the midst of a popular commotion, and finding himself, on arriving at his post, in the midst of a population intensely excited by the idea of the speedy reconstitution of their kingdom, quite ready to fight, but ruined by the continental blockade, distrustful of Napoleon, and far from confident in the success of his war against Russia, divided by a thousand different counsels, and turbulent and agitated as usual, he was surprised and disconcerted, and knew not how to act in the midst of the chaos in which he was immersed. In the meantime, passion led the Poles to adopt the idea of a general Diet, to be assembled immediately, and which, according to ancient usage, should proclaim, besides the reconstitution of Poland, the confederation of all its provinces, and a levy en masse of the population, against Russia. The poor King of Saxony, on whose head had fallen the Polish crown, had previously provided the ministers of the Grand Duchy with the necessary powers, and they gave in their cordial adhesion to the convocation of the Diet; and it was, accordingly, immediately assembled. Its first acts being the election as president of Adam Czartoryski, an octogenarian, and formerly marshal of one of the ancient Diets; the proclamation, in the midst of immense enthusiasm, of the re-establishment of Poland, the confederation of all its provinces, the insurrection of those which were still under foreign yoke, and the despatch of envoys to Napoleon to persuade him to declare with his sovereign lips—"Poland is re-established."

The Diet had separated after having appointed a commission entrusted with the duty of representing it and in some degree, the office of a national sovereignty, whilst the ministers of the Grand Duchy should fill that of the executive power. An arrangement of which one of the difficulties was that each of these bodies desired to exercise its own authority and that of the others also. But this was not the greatest of the inconveniences resulting from it. In the meantime it was necessary without loss of time, to direct their ardour towards those two essential objects, the levy of troops and the propagation of the insurrection in Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia; and if the Abbé de Prodt now had money at his command, extensive authority to act, and a genius for such undertakings as that in which he was now engaged, he might have succeeded in extracting from the fermenting elements around him, an organised force capable of raising Volhynia and Podolia, whilst Napoleon was organising Lithuania, already raised by his presence. But Napoleon

had neither given him money nor extended authority of action, and his operations had been limited to assisting the Poles in drawing up the manifesto which announced the re-establishment of the Polish kingdom, and which, when drawn up, was sent to Napoleon by the hands of a deputation, which was also charged to endeavour to persuade him to make some solemn declaration of adhesion to the step which had been taken.

The deputation arrived at Wilna shortly before Napoleon's departure, and greatly annoyed him, seeing he was very unwilling to be forced to any decided engagement, which might render the negotiation of peace with Russia too difficult. For although, at a distance, he had regarded the war as one which might be easily conducted, he now entertained juxta views respecting it, and was anxious that it should remain such a war, that a battle gained might conclude it with *éclat*. He knew very well that, were he to propose the reconstitution of the kingdom of Poland as one of the essential ends of the war, it would be necessary to reduce Russia to the last extremity; and he replied, therefore, to the Polish deputies in ambiguous terms, which were attended with all the usual inconveniences of ambiguous replies, being too clear for Russia and too obscure for Poland.

"Gentlemen," he said in reply to the address of the deputation, "Gentlemen, deputies of the confederation of Poland, I have listened with much interest to all that you have just addressed to me ! Poles, I should have thought and acted in your place as you have done ; I should have acted as you have acted in the assembly at Warsaw. The love of country is the first virtue of civilised humanity.

"In my position I have many interests to conciliate, many duties to fulfil. Had I reigned in the time of the first, the second, or the third division of Poland, I would have armed all my people in your support. As soon as victory enabled me to restore your ancient laws to your capital and a portion of your provinces, I eagerly seized the opportunity.

"I love your nation. During sixteen years I have been accustomed to see its soldiers fighting by my side, on the battle fields of Italy and Spain.

I applaud all that you have done ; I sanction the efforts which you have made ; all that I can do to second them I will do.

"If your efforts be unanimous you may well hope to succeed in compelling your enemies to recognise your rights ; but in these distant and vast countries it is on the unanimous efforts of their peoples alone that such hopes of success can be founded.



“I addressed you in the same terms on my first appearance in Poland. I must add, that I have guaranteed to the Emperor of Austria the integrity of his states, and that I cannot authorise any manœuvre or movement tending to disturb him in the peaceable possession of what remains to him of the Polish provinces. But let Lithuania, Samogitia, Witebsk, Polotsk, Mohilew, Volhynia, the Ukraine, and Podolia, be animated with the same spirit which I have found to exist in great Poland, and Providence will crown with success the sanctity of your cause, and will recompense you for that devotion to your country which renders you so interesting, and has given you so many claims upon my esteem and protection, upon which, in all circumstances, you may always rely.”

This address had no particularly unfavourable effect on the Polish deputies, for they were previously aware that Napoleon entertained the sentiments which it expressed, but its effect at Wilna, in spite of the enthusiasm caused by the presence of the victorious French troops, was most disastrous. “How can Napoleon,” said the Lithuanian, “demand that we should lavish our blood and our resources in his service, when he is unwilling on his part, to declare the reconstitution of the kingdom of Poland? And what withholds him from this course? Prussia is at his feet; Austria is dependent on his will, and might readily, moreover, be recompensed by Illyria; and Russia is already flying before his armies. Is it the truth, that he is not willing to restore us to existence as a nation? Is it the truth, that he has come here only to gain a victory over the Russians, intending then to retreat without having effected anything with regard to us, save having added half a million of Poles to the Grand Duchy, and exposed the greater number of us to exile and sequestration?” To these doubts it was replied, that Napoleon was in a delicate position, that it was absolutely necessary that he should act with caution, but that it was easy to see through his caution, that his real intention was to reconstitute Poland, should he be seriously aided;—that it was necessary, therefore, for the Polish people to rise *en masse*, and furnish him with the means of accomplishing the undertaking upon which he had entered. But the party which held these latter opinions was by far the least numerous, and the large body of people made Napoleon’s caution an excuse for want of energy, avarice, and selfish calculations.

Napoleon set out from Wilna on the evening of the 16th, after a sojourn there of eighteen days. On the morning of the 18th he arrived at Gloubokoé, a little town constructed of wood, and having taken up his quarters in its principal building, a large convent, hastened, as was his wont, to pre-



pare an establishment which might serve as a general dépôt for the use of the troops.

In the meantime the various corps continued their movements and defiled successively in front of the Drissa camp, as though they were about to attack it; being under orders, however, to make no such attempt. Murat having halted for a few days in advance of Swenziany, at Opsa, with the cavalry under Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, and Marshal Davoust's three divisions, had defiled before the Drissa camp, and taken up a position opposite Polotsk, near to Gloubokoé, and at Napoleon's immediate disposal. During this march, General Sebastian had permitted himself to be surprised by the Russian cavalry, which, having crossed the Dwina to observe our movements, took advantage of some carelessness on our side, to attack General Saint-Geniés, who defended himself most valiantly, but was taken prisoner with some hundreds of his men. On receipt of information of this appearance of the Russian cavalry, however, our cavalry hastened up, threw themselves on the enemy, took General Koulnieff who commanded them, and forced them to repass the Dwina.

Ney followed Murat, executing a similar movement, and placing himself on the left of the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin. The wet and the want of proper food had caused much loss amongst his younger soldiers by dysentery, and there were reasons to fear that this complaint would become contagious.

After Ney marched Oudinot, who, defiling within sight of Dunabourg, where the Russians had constructed a strong *tête de pont* on the Dwina, could not refrain, in spite of Napoleon's recommendations to the contrary, from assailing the work, which the Russians abandoned. This incident had no ulterior consequences, and Marshal Oudinot took up a position, in his turn, on the left of Ney. All three corps were thus assembled within a space of a few leagues, some of them having passed the Drissa camp, in front of which they had defiled, whilst the others remained opposite to it, and all were at the immediate command of Napoleon, who was at Gloubokoé with his guard. Marshal Macdonald alone retained a position at some distance on our left, between Poniewiez and Jacobstadt, covering Samogitia and the course of the Niemen which our convoys followed on their way to Kowno.

The movements which had been ordered on Napoleon's right, had been executed with equal punctuality. Prince Eugene occupied this portion of the line forming the link of connection with Marshal Davoust on the Dnieper, and, after

having rallied his troops and baggage train at Nowoi-Troki, he had followed the Minsk route, as far as Smorgoni, from which point he had marched upon Wileika, from whence he had continued his route by Dolghinow as far as Beresina, at which place there is a canal called the Lepel canal, which unites the Beresina, which is a tributary of the Dnieper, with the Oula, which is a tributary of the Dwina, and which may be regarded, therefore, as the connecting link between the Black Sea and the Baltic. On the 21st he would reach Kowno, and would have but a few steps to take to reach the Dwina, at a place between Oula and Beschenkowicz, where it may be easily forded.

A force of almost 200,000 men were thus posted within a space of a few leagues, and at Napoleon's immediate command; and as this was a force quite sufficient to overwhelm Bagration's army, he made immediate preparations to cross the Dwina on his left, to turn and surround him, according to his previously formed plan. Everything as yet had proceeded according to his wishes, and he only awaited the arrival of his heavy artillery, which would probably arrive about the 22nd or 23rd of July, to execute his grand designs. In the meantime he devoted himself with his usual activity to preparations conducive to the welfare of his army.

Whilst Napoleon was thus employed in conducting his own movements, Marshal Davoust continued to conduct the operations committed to his charge, the object of which was to check Bagration at Mohilew, preventing him from effecting the passage of the Dnieper at this point, forcing him to descend lower down, and to execute a long detour to rejoin, beyond the Dnieper and the Dwina, the great army under Barclay de Tolly. The success of this manœuvre was essential to that of Napoleon himself, and had Marshal Davoust had the whole of Jerome's corps at his command, he might not only have stopped but even overwhelmed Bagration's army; but, unfortunately, King Jerome's troops were six or eight marches distant and he was at Mohilew, whither he had hastened at the utmost speed for the purpose of barring Bagration's road, with only the divisions Compans, Dessaix, and Claparède, and a division of cuirassiers. The remainder of his cavalry had extended themselves to the left for the purpose of forming a line of communication with Prince Eugene, and to the right, for the purpose of watching the Polish and Westphalian troops actually on their march.

In the meantime Prince Bagration, having crossed the Beresina at Bobruisk, without having been overwhelmed by the united armies of Davoust and Jerome, considered

himself in safety, for he had the strong fortress in his rear as a protection against Jerome, and he hoped to reach the Dnieper at Mohilew, without encountering any obstacle. On the evening of the 21st, in fact, he approached this place, having sixty thousand effective troops at his command.

Marshal Davoust, as we have already said, occupied Mohilew with the divisions Compans, Dessaix, and Claparède. His forces, reduced by the fatigues of their march were still further weakened by the withdrawal of detachments which he was compelled to place at numerous points, and the effective force at his command with which to meet the sixty thousand troops of the enemy, amounted only to twenty-two thousand infantry and six thousand cavalry.

On the evening of the 21st a skirmish which took place between one of our advanced posts, consisting of a squadron of Bordessoulle's light cavalry, and Platow's Cossacks, announced the approach of the army of the Dnieper; and on the following morning Marshal Davoust, accompanied by General Haxo, made a careful reconnaissance of the field of battle. The Staroi-Bychow road, on which had taken place the skirmish of the previous evening, was also identical with the Bobruisk road which, after having run directly from the Beresina to the Dnieper, turned almost at right angles towards Staroi-Bychow, and followed the right bank of the Dnieper as far as Mohilew. The Marshal and General Haxo setting out from Mohilew descended this road, which, bordered by a double row of birch trees, like all the roads of the country, extended between the Dnieper which was on its left, and a streamlet named the Mischowska, on its right. After having advanced between the Mischowska and the Dnieper about three leagues, they saw that the Mischowska suddenly turned to the left towards the Dnieper, at a point at which was situated a mill, called the Fatowa mill, and which was provided with a milldam. The Mischowska thus cut the road, passing under a bridge on which was a great building called the Auberge de Saltanowka, and losing itself in the Dnieper. The space of ground which was thus circumscribed, at once suggested itself to Marshal Davoust and General Haxo as most suitable for a battle-field, and as a position on which there would be the greatest chance of holding the enemy in check, whatever might be their numbers or determination. Ordering such works, therefore, at the bridge and the mill as would prevent the enemy from crossing the Mischowska, and entrusting the defence of these two posts to the defence of five battalions of the 85th of the line under General Friederichs, (the 108th being posted in the rear under General Dessaix, as a reserve) and a portion

of his artillery, Marshal Davoust proceeded towards Mohilew for the purpose of observing whether the enemy would endeavour to cross the Mischowska on his right, which would have rendered useless any resistance at the Saltanowka bridge and the Fatowa mill; and having advanced in that direction about a league, he reached a place on the bank of the Mischowska at the little village of Seletz, at which the enemy might have crossed it. Marshal Davoust, therefore, posted at this spot one of the four regiments of the division; and, a little in the rear, a reserve of two other regiments of the division Compans—the 57th and 111th of the line—together with Valence's cuirassiers. Finally, as an additional precaution, he ranged the Polish division Claparède, behind the division Compans, to form a line of communication between Mohilew and the troops on the Staroi-Bychow route; and directed General Pajol with his light cavalry and the 25th of the line (the 4th regiment of the division Compans), to watch the Ighoumen route by Pogost, as it was possible that a portion of the Russian army might attempt to advance by it to turn our position at Mohilew.

On the following day, the 23rd of July, as soon as morning dawned, Prince Bagration, after having left the 8th corps on the Bobruisk route, as a protection against the possible but improbable pursuit of King Jerome, advanced the 7th corps against the Saltanowka bridge and the Fatowa mill, with orders to take them at any cost.

The division Kolioubakin attacked the Saltanowka bridge and the division Paskewitch the Fatowa mill. At first the contest was carried on on both sides merely by the sharpshooters and the artillery, but after some time the Russians, finding that they suffered greater loss than they inflicted, the division Kolioubakin advanced against the Saltanowka bridge, and was driven back with great loss, and compelled to retire into shelter.

Marshal Davoust, who had been attracted to the scene of action by the sound of the cannon, finding matters proceeding well in front, now withdrew to the rear, to the village of Seletz, to discover whether he were threatened on this side with an attack in flank.

Having become convinced that there was no imminent danger on this side, he carried the 61st, which had been posted at the village of Seletz, a little more forward, and at the same time advanced to a similar extent the 57th and 111th, and the cuirassiers; for he perceived that the enemy's great effort would be directed against the front of his position.

The Russians were, in fact, at this moment making a



great and last effort. The division Kolioubakin debouching en masse by the high road, advanced in close column upon the Saltanowka bridge, and the division Paskewitch deploying uncovered in front of the Fatowa mill, advanced to the edge of the milldam in spite of the well-directed fire of our artillery. General Friederichs, however, with the 85th received the division Kolioubakin with so furious a fire of musketry, that after having advanced boldly towards the bridge, it hesitated for a moment, and then beat a hasty retreat. In the meantime the division Paskewitch, finding in the stream a less insurmountable obstacle, attempted to cross it by passing over the dyke which retained the water for the mill; and the 108th perceiving this, advanced under the command of an officer brave even to rashness, and drove them back at the point of the bayonet. Unfortunately, however, instead of remaining contented with the advantage thus gained, their commander led them in their turn across the obstacle which had been so furiously disputed, and debouched in the midst of the open ground which extended beyond, where they found themselves exposed to a circle of the enemy's fire, and being attacked by the bayonet they were driven back across the stream, with a serious loss in killed and wounded and leaving a hundred of their number in the hands of the Russians.

At this moment the Marshal arrived from the rear, and immediately rallied the battalion which had just returned in disorder, causing it to execute some manœuvres under fire for the purpose of restoring it to confidence. He then brought the whole of his artillery, and directing it against the division Paskewitch once more forced it to retire into shelter. And thus from the Fatowa mill to the Saltanowka bridge the Russians had exhausted themselves in useless efforts, and lost their troops in the proportion of three or four to one of ours.

Nevertheless the division Paskewitch attempted to ascend on our right following the Mischowska as far as the village of Seletz, and succeeded in advancing in front of the village, when some of its skirmishers even ventured to cross the stream. The troops, however, who made this rash attempt were speedily driven back by the voltigeurs of the 61st, and the whole regiment throwing itself beyond the Mischowska attacked the Russians and compelled them to evacuate this portion of the field. In the meantime General Friederichs in our front, between the Fatowa mill and the Saltanowka bridge, had crossed the stream with some companies of picked men, had turned the open space in which the Russians had deployed in front of the mill, assailed them unexpectedly in the rear, driven them back with great slaughter at the bayonet's point, and thus cleared the front of the field of battle of the enemy.

Our troops now assumed the offensive, advanced en masse along the great Staroi-Bychow road, and after having pursued the Russians about a league, perceived on the open space of ground Prince Bagration in position with his whole army. And on this new battle-field the contest would have been as disastrous to us as it had been for the Russians on the brink of the Mischowska; but the intrepid Compans, who was as prudent as brave, checked the ardour of his troops, and retreated, unpursued by the enemy; for Prince Bagration, terrified at the loss, amounting to about four thousand in killed and wounded, which he had suffered on the banks of the Mischowska, and informed that Marshal Davoust would speedily receive reinforcements, considered that he ought to retreat upon Staroi-Bychow, for the purpose of passing the Dnieper, and then advancing upon Micislaw.

Thus terminated this glorious combat, in which the twenty-eight thousand men of the first corps, had checked the sixty thousand troops under Bagration. Had Prince Bagration been better acquainted with the ground on which the battle was fought, he might have executed a dangerous attack on Marshal Davoust's widely extended right with Borosdin's corps; but it would have had to encounter, and could not have easily vanquished, the infantry of Generals Compans and Claparède, and the cuirassiers of General Valence. We must also add that had Prince Poniatowski been able to appear, during this battle of the 23rd, by Iakzitey, on the rear or flank of Prince Bagration's army, he might have inflicted upon it, even although the opportunity at Bobruisk had failed, a most serious disaster.

Marshal Davoust, employed the day succeeding that of the battle in bringing in his wounded, and, obtaining information respecting the Poles and Westphalians; being unwilling to leave before their arrival the species of entrenched camp which he had found so useful; and at the same time made every preparation for ascending the course of the Dnieper as far as Orscha, in order to approach Napoleon, who, as we have said above, awaited at Gloubokoé the propitious moment for turning, by Polotsk and Witebsk, the Russian army under Barclay de Tolly. To prevent Prince Bagration from joining the principal army would be henceforth impossible, for it would not be practicable to follow him indefinitely beyond the Dnieper; but this junction had been delayed for a time, and the success, although falling far short of that which had been at first hoped for, was sufficient for the accomplishment of Napoleon's chief design.

Napoleon's profound calculations had determined him to

choose the 22nd or 23rd on which to execute his great manœuvre. He was at Gloubokoé, having on his right towards Kamen, Prince Eugene, in his front, towards Ouchatsch, Murat's cavalry, and the three divisions Morand, Friand, Gudin, and on his left Ney and Oudinot, opposite the Drissa camp. The Imperial Guard was posted at Gloubokoé itself. And thus Napoleon had one hundred and ninety thousand men at his immediate command, ready to cross the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly; whilst the success of Marshal Davoust was strongly conducive to the execution of the designs he had in view. But at this moment a singular revolution took place in the Russian staff.

Barclay de Tolly had, as we have seen, fallen back upon the Drissa camp, and by this manœuvre had excited a strong feeling of disapprobation; the lower ranks of the army being indignant at the idea of retreating before the French troops at all; and those of a superior grade, who could comprehend the wisdom of a plan of indefinite retreat, regarding the establishment of the Drissa camp as perfectly irreconcilable with common sense. And indeed, the establishment of a camp on the Dwina, on the very path of the French troops, and at the commencement, we might say, of their course, when their strength and resources must be still unimpaired, was scarcely in accordance with reason, since even if he did not force it, he would be able to turn it, or to take advantage of the forced immobility of the principal army, to penetrate by his right the opening which separates the sources of the Dwina from those of the Dnieper, and to divide for the remainder of the campaign, the long line of the Russian armies. Moreover the Drissa camp was constructed in such a manner as to offer but very slight means of security. The plan generally pursued, when it is intended to defend a river, is, to cover the troops charged with the defence with the river itself; but here the camp had been placed in front of the river, and was covered by it only in the rear and on the sides; for, at the instance of General Pfuhl the Russian engineers had selected a deep curve, formed by the Dwina at Drissa for the position of the camp, and defended its front by two lines of defence, extending from one bend of the river to the other; four bridges being provided for the retreat of the army, should it be compelled to evacuate its position.

Although the camp was calculated to oppose great obstacles to the impetuosity of the French, it was at the same time well calculated to assist Napoleon's manœuvre, which consisted in turning the Russian position, and thus surrounding the troops under Barclay de Tolly. If, in fact, Napo-



leon had had time to pass the Dwina and thus advance on the rear of the Russian army, it cannot readily be imagined how it would have been able to defile by the above mentioned four bridges, in the presence of two hundred thousand French soldiers.

In the meantime a universal cry of indignation arose throughout the Russian army against the plan of the campaign as described by General Pfuhl, and this was succeeded by expressions of disapprobation of the presence of the Emperor in the army, which introduced, it was said, the spirit of courts and the intrigues of courtiers, where military operations should be the only care. Alexander could not, it was declared, himself command, and that even if he could, he was unwilling to do so, and that by his presence he prevented any one else from properly commanding, on account of the deference which was naturally paid to his advice, and that the fear of incurring his blame, or that of his favourites, would always, as long as he was present, hinder the most resolute General from adopting any decided course of action. A strange spectacle was thus presented by this Czar, the perfect type in modern Europe of absolute sovereignty, who was thus dependent on his principal courtiers, and almost driven from his army by a species of émeute in his court! Such is the profound illusion of despotism. Our powers of command can only really extend so far as we are capable of conceiving and accomplishing our wishes; rank is really, as far as power is concerned, a thing of nought; and the most absolute monarch is frequently but the valet of a valet who knows that of which his master is ignorant. Genius alone can really command, because it has powers of comprehension and will, and even genius is dependent on wise counsels, for it cannot of itself see everything, and if, blinded by pride, it rejects counsel, it speedily falls into folly, and from folly into ruin.

The Russian military aristocracy, which, by turns threatening or supporting Alexander, had led him step by step to resist French domination, was not willing now that it had forced him into war, to allow him to dictate to them, as to the manner in which it was to be conducted. Violent and desperate, it was prepared to sacrifice the whole wealth and the whole blood of the nation in support of the contest, and was determined not to permit an Emperor, who was doubtless patriotic, but at the same time gentle, humane, and changeable, to check its patriotic fury.

In their excitement the chief persons of this military aristocracy determined to adopt a plan which would have the effect of compelling Alexander to resign the system pro-



pounded by General Pfuhl, and the position at the Drissa camp, and induce him to ascend the Dwina as far as Witebsk, where it would be possible to effect a junction with Bagration's army by Smolensk; and they resolved when these points should have been once gained, that they would take a step further, and invite Alexander to quit the army, adopting the respectful and even flattering pretext, that the direction of the war was not the principal task of government; that the care of providing means for its maintenance was a still higher duty; that one or two armies in the rear of that which was in the field were absolutely necessary; that these could only be obtained from the patriotism of the country; that Alexander, at that moment an object of national adoration, would be capable of obtaining all that he desired; that he should proceed in person, therefore, to the principal cities, Witebsk, Smolensk, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, to convoke all classes of the people, the noblesse, the clergy, and the bourgeoisie, and demand of them their utmost sacrifices;—that he would thus perform a service both more urgent and more useful than any which he could perform by remaining with the army; that it was the duty of his generals to die on their country's soil in its defence, and his to seek for others of her children who would be ready soon to perish in their turn. And to the honour of this imperious and devoted aristocracy, which had violently freed itself, twelve years before, from the rule of a mad prince, and which was now removing from the army an Emperor whose presence detracted from its efficacy, we ought to recognise the fact that in thus acting, its sole object was that it might with greater freedom pour out its own blood, and that of the armies, in the national defence.

The former minister of war, Araktchejev, a man of ordinary capacity, but considerable energy, and Balachoff, the minister of police, dared to present to Alexander an address in writing recommending his immediate departure for Moscow, for the reasons just stated; and the Generals Bagowouth and Ostermann besought Alexander with an energy which exceeded simple entreaty, to order the abandonment of the Drissa camp, and to direct a movement from right to left upon Witebsk, for the purpose of frustrating, by effecting a junction with Prince Bagration, the manœuvre which they began to suspect Napoleon was about to attempt.

Moved by these representations, Alexander summoned a council of war, which included not only his own staff but that also of Barclay de Tolly; together with Araktchejev, the engineer Michaux, and Colonel Walzogen, General Pfuhl's confidant. Having first given a general view of the scheme

which he had adopted for the conduct of the campaign, Alexander entrusted its justification in detail to Colonel Walzogen, who, however, after attempting to defend by arguments more or less specious, the position which had been chosen for the Drissa camp, yielded to the general feeling of the counsel, and admitted that it was necessary to quit this camp immediately, and to advance upon Witebsk, whence it would be possible to afford support to Bagration. This view, in entire conformity with the general desire, met with no opposition, and was unanimously adopted.

But although General Pfuhl's ridiculous attempt to seek at Drissa what Lord Wellington had found at Torres-Védras, was thus abandoned, Alexander by no means abandoned the essential part of his plan, which consisted in a retreat into the interior of the country, and which, indeed, was approved of by all persons of sagacity. He confided, therefore, the execution of this idea to General Barclay de Tolly, refraining from giving him the title of Commander-in-Chief, that he might not hurt Bagration's vanity, and leaving him in the position of Minister of War, which naturally placed all the Generals at his orders. Having made this arrangement, he yielded to the suggestion which had been made to him, and left head quarters, taking with him all the troublesome counsellors from whom Barclay de Tolly and the army were equally anxious to be freed. General Pfuhl departed for St. Petersburg with Araktchejef, Armfeld, and others; and the Italian Paulucci, at first disgraced for his frankness, was appointed governor of Riga.

Barclay de Tolly, who now remained at the head of the army, with the position of Minister of War, was of all the Russian Generals the most capable of directing its operations judiciously. Skilful, thoroughly acquainted with all the duties of his profession, cool and resolute, the sole inconvenience attending his command was, that he inspired his subordinates with a bitter feeling of jealousy, which his acknowledged superiority could not quench, and that he was responsible in the eyes of the army for a system of retreat which, however judicious, deeply wounded its pride. For the moment he adhered thoroughly to the idea of evacuating the Drissa camp, following the course of the Dwina as far as Witebsk, and taking up a position opposite Smolensk, where it was hoped that Bagration would speedily arrive by ascending the course of the Dnieper, for the purpose of affording support to the latter, by advancing into the space between the sources of the Dwina and those of the Dnieper, as circumstances might render necessary. This movement, although closing against us the Moscow route, would leave

that of St. Petersburg open, and therefore, for the purpose of closing it as much as possible he resolved to leave in position on the lower Dwina, between Polotsk and Riga, the corps under Wittgenstein, who, with twenty-five thousand men, speedily to be reinforced by the troops from Finland and the reserves from the north of the empire, would cover the important place Riga, and threaten the left flank of the French, whilst the army of the Danube, should it return from Turkey in time, might threaten their right flank.

These arrangements having been made, Barclay de Tolly commenced his march on the 19th of July, and ascended the Dwina, the infantry being on the right bank, whilst the cavalry were on the left, on which side they were more than once exposed to engagements with our troops, but were always able to cross the river, which, at this period of the year, above Polotsk, was always fordable. The rear guard consisted of the troops under General Doctoroff. The whole army after its separation from Wittgenstein's corps amounted to ninety thousand men, proceeded thus on its march along the two banks of the Dwina on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of July, keeping at a sufficient distance from the French, who, on their part, had resolved, for the better execution of their manœuvre, not to approach the enemy too closely.

Napoleon speedily perceived, in spite of the efforts made by the Russian cavalry to cover the movement, that Barclay de Tolly was ascending the Dwina towards Witebsk, for the purpose of supporting Bagration, who, on his side, was probably ascending the Dnieper as far as Smolensk; and this manœuvre of the enemy rather encouraged him in the prosecution of his grand design. Had the Russians retired from the Drissa camp for the purpose of plunging into the depths of Russia, he might have despaired of overtaking them, but as Barclay de Tolly was ascending the Dwina and Bagration was ascending the Dnieper, each by a similar movement, it was always possible for him to interpose between them in pursuance of his original plan. Marshal Davoust, after having compelled Prince Bagration to descend the Dnieper, would reach Smolensk before him, and Napoleon himself had but to ascend the Dwina, making a vigorous movement on his right to find an opportunity of accomplishing at Witebsk what he had not been able to accomplish at Polotsk, namely, the passage of the Dwina on the left of Barclay de Tolly, for the purpose of overlapping him, and taking him in reverse.

In the meantime Prince Eugene was on the 22nd of July



at Kamen ; Murat, with the cavalry, and the three detached divisions of the 1st corps on the left of Prince Eugene ; whilst Ney and Oudinot were behind these, and the Guard followed by Gloubokoé. Napoleon marched all this mass of troops on Beschenkowicz ; at the same time ordering Marshal Oudinot to cross the Dwina at Polotsk, to drive back any of the enemy's troops he might there meet with, and then remained at the head of about one hundred and fifty thousand men, having Marshal Davoust on his right, at the head of his own three divisions, and the troops which had composed Jerome's corps.

Prince Eugene crossed the Oula on the 23rd and advanced with some light troops upon Beschenkowicz, a little town situated on the bank of the Dwina, where it was possible to observe the movements of the Russian troops on the other side of the stream. At the same time on the right bank, which was the one occupied by our troops, the Russian cavalry rear guard displayed itself in the direction of Witebsk, and fell back defending itself with more than usual obstinacy, and giving rise to hopes on our side, that the Russians would at length, as was so ardently desired, join battle. Napoleon ordered Prince Eugene, who had been only able to reach Beschenkowicz with an advanced guard, to bring up the whole of his corps on the following day, the 24th, together with the Nansouty cavalry, and to throw a bridge across the Dwina, for the purpose of making a reconnaissance on the other side. In the meantime, he had himself quitted Gloubokoé, and was half a march in the rear of Prince Eugene ; having caused the whole of the army to execute a general movement of a similar character.

On the 24th Prince Eugene marched his corps to Beschenkowicz ; and whilst General Nansouty's light cavalry was passing this place, advanced along the Ostrowno-road, spread his Voltigeurs along the Dwina to drive back the Russian troops which were observed on the other side, and brought up his artillery to keep them at a still greater distance. The pontonniers attached to this corps threw themselves boldly into the stream, for the purpose of constructing a bridge, and within a few hours completed it ; but the Bavarian cavalry, impatient to effect the passage, dashed into the stream, and hastened to sweep the opposite bank, eliciting the approbation of the whole army by the precision and rapidity of their manœuvres.

Towards the middle of the afternoon a great tumult of horses announced the approach of Napoleon. The Italian troops, which had not yet seen him, received him with



tremendous acclamations, which he only acknowledged, however, by a brief salute, so deeply engrossed were his thoughts by the plan with which they were occupied. He descended hastily from his horse for the purpose of addressing some observations to the chief of the pontonniers, and then, remounting, traversed the bridge at a gallop, and, following the Bavarian cavalry, proceeded some distance on the left bank of the Dwina for the purpose of observing the Russians on their march.

After having gone about two or three leagues, he returned, convinced that the whole Russian army had defiled upon Witebsk, and resolving to advance in this direction still more boldly and swiftly than before, for the purpose of placing himself, by force should it be necessary, between Witebsk and Smolensk, between Barclay de Tolly and Bagration. He ordered, therefore, Prince Eugene and General Nansouty to advance, on the following day, the 25th, upon Ostrowno; at the same time directing Murat to precede them with the cavalry.

On the same day, General Barclay de Tolly, desiring to retard the progress of the French by disputing the ground with them foot by foot, had posted in advance of Ostrowno, the 4th corps with a brigade of dragoons, the hussars of the Guard, the hussars of Towny, and a battery of horse artillery.

General Piré, at the head of the 8th hussars and the 16th horse chasseurs, advancing by the Ostrowno road, discovered at the top of a slight ascent, the Russian light cavalry escorting the horse artillery, and, in spite of a vigorous fire of grape which was immediately opened on our troops by the enemy, throwing himself upon the Russian cavalry, put to flight the regiment which occupied the middle of the road, charged that which was posted on the plain on the right, returned upon that which was posted on the plain to the left, and having defeated each in turn, threw himself on the Russian artillery, sabreing the gunners and taking eight cannon.

Scarcely had our troops ascended the slight eminence above mentioned, when they perceived in the plain beyond, the whole of the 4th corps (Ostermann's), supported on one side by the Dwina, and on the other by wooded hills.

Murat immediately made arrangements for meeting the enemy. On his left, towards the Dwina, he arranged his regiments of cuirassiers in three lines; in the centre he deployed the 8th leger, to reply to the fire of the Russian infantry, and supported them with a portion of the cavalry

under General Bruyère. On his right, he arranged the remainder of this cavalry, which consisted of the 6th Polish lancers, the 10th Polish hussars, and a regiment of Prussian Uhlans; and sent a message to Prince Eugene to advance as speedily as possible with Delzon's division of infantry.

These arrangements had not been completed, when the Ingrian dragoons advanced to charge his extreme right, and were met by the Poles, who, inspired with fury at the sight of the Russians, executed a movement from front to right, and precipitated themselves on the enemy, throwing them into disorder, slaying a great number, and taking two or three hundred prisoners. In the meantime, the two battalions deployed from the 8th leger, occupied the middle of the field of battle, and protected our cavalry against the fire of the Russian infantry. To free himself from them, General Ostermann sent against them three detached battalions from his left. Murat immediately charged these battalions with some squadrons, and forced them to fall back; and then, no longer daring to attack our cavalry in front, Ostermann advanced under cover of a wood; many other battalions on our right had also pushed forward, two on our left, with the same design. Murat, who up to this time had only the cavalry at his disposal, threw against the battalions which presented themselves on the right, the lancers, the Polish hussars, and the Prussian Uhlans, which, charging the enemy at full galop, forced them to retreat in disorder. On the opposite wing, the 9th lancers, supported by a regiment of cuirassiers, with equal vigour broke the Russian battalions which had been sent against our left, and compelled them also to retreat.

This struggle between the French cavalry and the whole of the Russian infantry had endured for many hours, when at length the division Delzons arrived, and the sight of its serried lines induced Ostermann to retreat upon Ostrowno; having lost eight pieces of cannon, seven or eight hundred prisoners, and from twelve to fifteen hundred in killed or wounded. The loss on the side of our cavalry, which had distinguished itself during the day by the vigor, rapidity, and skill of its movements, was, at the most, about three or four hundred.

This combat showed that the Russians intended to dispute our advance, and perhaps to give us battle; and nothing could be more in accordance with the views of Napoleon, who, persisting in his resolution to prevent the junction of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration; and, more especially to outstrip the former, could desire nothing more than a

battle, since he would then, most probably, be able to procure immediately all the results which he expected from a skilful manœuvre. He ordered, therefore, Prince Eugene and Murat to march their troops *en masse* upon Ostrowno, on the following day, and even to pass this point, for the purpose of approaching Witebsk as closely as possible.

On the following day, accordingly, Murat and Ney, having well concerted their movements, marched forward their troops in close company, and having in this manner traversed Ostrowno in the morning, at two leagues distance beyond it found the enemy ranged behind a great ravine, in strong masses of infantry and cavalry. The field of battle presented the same characteristics as those of the preceding days. Ascending the valley from the Dwina, there were on our right hills covered with wood, in the centre a great road bordered with birch-trees, and crossed with ravines, over which were thrown little bridges, and on the left the Dwina, pursuing a sinuous route, and at this season frequently fordable.

Reaching towards eight o'clock the brink of the ravine behind which the enemy was established, our troops encountered the Russian tirailleurs, and the cavalry was obliged to fall back, leaving to the infantry the care of forcing the obstacle. As soon as General Delzons had arrived in front of the ravine, which checked our advance, he directed the 92nd of the line on the thick woods on our right, together with a battalion of voltigeurs of the 106th, at the same time sending a Croatian regiment supported by the 84th of the line on the left, and keeping the remainder of the 106th in the centre in reserve. The artillery was placed in position by General d'Anthouard, in such a manner as to cover by its fire the attack which was about to be made by the infantry.

Whilst the troops on the right proceeded to ascend the wooded heights under a vigorous fire, those on the left, conducted by General Huard, succeeded in crossing the ravine and establishing themselves on a plateau which had been evacuated by the enemy. This movement was followed by the troops in the centre; and the 8th léger, the artillery and the cavalry, proceeded successively to occupy the plateau which the enemy had abandoned. Whilst the troops forming the left, and composed of the Croatian regiment and the 84th pursued their own success without taking into consideration the fortunes of their comrades on the opposite wing, and had advanced a considerable distance, the latter failed to make a progress equally rapid, had exhausted itself in vain



efforts to penetrate into the thickness of the wood, which was defended by numerous infantry. Our right wing was thus held in check, whilst our centre was considerably advanced, and our left still more so; and the Russian General, Konownitsyn, perceiving this state of affairs, directed against our left and centre the whole of his reserves, and led them vigorously to the attack; whereupon the Croatian regiment and the 84th, which had not expected this sudden assault, finding themselves taken in flank, were speedily driven back and were about to be hurled into the ravine, leaving our artillery in the hands of the enemy, when Murat, at the head of the Polish lancers, hurling himself with the rapidity of lightning upon the Russian column, scattered the first battalion and strewed the ground with slain. At the same moment an officer named Ricardo, at the head of a company of the 8th léger, advanced to the rescue of our cannon, which the enemy were about to seize; whilst the 106th, which had hitherto been held in reserve, also advanced to the support of the 84th and the Croats. These combined efforts checked the Russians, carried our left in advance, and sustained our centre, whilst Murat, Eugene and Junot, (commander of the army of Italy under Eugene, hastened to the right, where General Roussel, at the head of the 92nd of the line, and the voltigeurs of the 106th had the greatest difficulty in overcoming the double obstacle presented by the heights and the woods.

Perceiving other deep columns (those of Ostermann) beyond the troops of Konownitsyn, on ground which became more and more broken, Murat and Eugene now hesitated, although victorious, to advance their troops too far, as they did not know whether it would suit Napoleon's plans to bring on a general engagement. But suddenly they were relieved from their embarrassment by the approach of Napoleon, who appeared with his staff, and having cast a glance over the field of battle, gave orders to pursue the enemy until evening.

This second combat cost us twelve hundred in killed and wounded, including the brave General Roussel who was killed; the loss on the side of the Russians amounting to about two thousand.

Napoleon passed the night of this day in the midst of the advanced guard, resolving to place himself at dawn at the head of his troops, for each new step rendered the position of the army more perilous, and might be productive of the gravest consequences. He had ordered the detached divisions of the first corps, the guard, and Marshal Ney, to join the head of the army with the greatest possible despatch,



that he might be in a position to give battle should the enemy be disposed to accept it; and had left the Bavarians exhausted with fatigue, in the rear at Beschenkowiczy, to cover the communications with Polotsk, the post assigned to Oudinot, and with Wilna, the central point of all our resources and all our communications.

On the following morning at daybreak, Napoleon, followed by Prince Eugene and King Murat, went forward for the purpose of personally inspecting the movements of the troops. Witebsk was now at no great distance, and its steeples were already visible on our left, on the bank of the Dwina, at the foot of a hill. A ravine, the bridge across which had been burned, separated us from the enemy, and at some distance beyond it, on a rather extensive plain, were visible a numerous Russian rear-guard, composed of cavalry and light infantry preparing to dispute its passage, whilst beyond a little river which ran at the bottom of this plain, joining the Dwina near Witebsk, was the Russian army itself, in order of battle, and apparently amounting to ninety or a hundred thousand men. The adoption of this position by the enemy seemed to intimate that they were determined to give us battle to prevent us interposing to frustrate their intended junction with Bagration, and from penetrating into the open space which separates the Dwina from the Dnieper; and Napoleon, therefore, immediately sent off aides-de-camp after aides-de-camp to hasten the approach of the remainder of the army. During the delay necessarily occasioned by the reconstruction of the bridge over the ravine, and the defiling of the troops across it, Napoleon took up a position a little to the left, in the rear, on an eminence from whence he could survey at a glance the whole extent of the field of battle. The weather was superb, full of sunshine and excessively warm. The army of Italy formed, as usual, the head of our column, in company with General Nansouty's cavalry. Delzon's division, which had been in action the previous evening, now gave way to the division of General Broussier, who hastened to repair the bridge, which he speedily rendered fit for the passage of the troops. The 16th cavalry chasseurs of the brigade Piré were the first to pass the ravine, followed by three hundred voltigeurs of the 9th of the line, and defiling by the left at the foot of the eminence on which Napoleon had taken up his position, advanced into the plain, whilst Broussier's regiments were crossing the bridge in their turn, and proceeding a little too much to the left, the 16th was attacked by the Cossacks of the Imperial Russian Guard, and, in spite of a most gallant defence, was compelled to give way after having suffered severe loss. At

the same moment, the greater portion of the Russian cavalry was set in motion, and being thrown upon our left, seemed to swallow up the three hundred voltigeurs of the 9th, who, however, checked the numerous charges of the enemy with a well sustained fire. Still pursuing their movement in advance, however, the latter almost reached the foot of the eminence occupied by Napoleon, and attacked the squares which the troops of Broussier's division had formed as soon as they had crossed the ravine. But the first of these squares formed by the 53rd of the line, received them with the *aplomb* of veteran troops of Italy, and having repulsed their charge, advanced unbroken, and disengaged the chasseurs and the three hundred voltigeurs, who had remained as it were, drowned in the midst of a flood of assailants. The action took place in the sight of the whole army, and it was filled with joy as it beheld the little group of voltigeurs emerging in safety from the midst of the frightful *mêlé* in which it had been involved; whilst Napoleon, who had observed the whole affair, crossed the ravine, and riding in front of the brave voltigeurs, exclaimed, "Who are you, my friends?" "Voltigeurs of the 9th of the line, and all of us children of Paris," was the reply. "Ah! you are brave men, and all deserve the Cross of the Legion of Honour," rejoined the Emperor; and he went forward to the squares of Broussier's division, which had advanced into the plain, and pursued with the fire of its artillery the numerous cavalry of General Pahlen. As Nansouty's cavalry and Delzon's division also speedily came up on the centre and the right, respectively, the Russians, considering that it would be imprudent to attempt to hold their ground against such forces, had repassed the little river, the Loutcheza, and drawn up their troops there in battle array behind it; and had all his troops been now at his command, Napoleon would have seized the opportunity of giving battle while the moment seemed to offer. As, however, the troops at his immediate disposal were insufficient for the purpose, he resolved to employ the remainder of the day in reconnaissances, and in concentrating his troops. In the meantime our soldiers longed for the decisive contest, however bloody it might be. They were worn out, indeed, with a march which had no result, which had been pursued under a heat which had reached twenty-seven degrees Réaumur, and during which they had had only the very scantiest supply of brandy, scarcely any bread, and had been compelled to eat their meat without salt. Their ranks, also, had been much thinned by fatigue; the combats in which they had just been engaged had deprived them of three thousand men in killed

and wounded, and the departure of the Bavarians had been a loss of fifteen thousand more. Nevertheless, the remaining troops, consisting of Nansouty's and Montbrun's cavalry, the army of Italy, the three divisions of the first corps, the troops under Ney, and the Guard, still amounting to one hundred and twenty-five thousand men — all excellent soldiers—were more than sufficient for the army of Barclay de Tolly.

The determination of Barclay de Tolly to give us battle was, indeed, most daring, and was the result of a more powerful consideration than the bitter complaints of his troops, which were indignant at their continued retreat. Had he withdrawn a step further in the rear, the communication between Witebsk and Smolensk would have been intercepted, and Bagration, whom he had arranged to meet at Babinowiczi, would have been checked in his march, probably caught between the troops of Davoust and Bagration, and consequently destroyed. He resolved, therefore, whatever might be the consequences, to fight a desperate battle behind the little river Loutcheza, although the withdrawal of Wittgenstein's corps, the protracted marches, and the three days contest in which they had just been engaged, had reduced his troops to ninety thousand men, whilst the French amounted to one hundred and twenty-five thousand. His resolution was desperate, but the occasion was one of those in which desperate resolutions save empires.

He had employed the whole day in preparations, when an officer suddenly arrived bearing the most urgent reasons to induce him to change his plan. The officer was one of Bagration's aides-de-camps, and brought information of the battle of Mohilew, and its consequences, which were that Bagration, forced by Davoust to pass the Dnieper much lower than Mohilew, was compelled to make a long detour for the purpose of joining Barclay de Tolly in the opening which separates the sources of the two rivers, and could only, at most, hope to join the latter at Smolensk. Such was the information brought by Bagration's aide-de-camp, and it showed that, whilst a further retrograde movement would by no means render impossible the junction of the two armies behind the line of the Dnieper and the Dwina, it would be utterly useless to fight a dangerous battle for an object, the attainment of which would not be jeopardised by the continuance of the retreat. Relieved, therefore, of the immense responsibility which he had been nearly forced to incur, he resolved to continue his retreat the same night; and accordingly, late on the night of the 27th, when fatigue had begun to relax the vigilance of the French, the whole of his army



resumed its march with the most remarkable unity of action, silence, and precision. The watch fires were left burning and the Count Pahlen's rear-guard remained on the banks of the Loutcheza, the more completely to deceive the enemy. The army retreated in three columns, that of the right composed of the 6th and 5th corps (Doctoroff's and the guard) marching by the Roudnia route upon Smolensk, that of the centre, consisting of the third corps Touczkoff's) proceeding by Kolycki upon Poreczié, and that of the left, composed of the 2nd and 4th corps (Bagowouth's and Ostermann's) making for the same point by Janowiezi.

Poreczié, towards which two of the Russian columns were thus directing their march, was situated behind a little marshy and wooded stream, the Kasplia, which crossing the space of eighteen or twenty leagues which lies between the sources of the Dnieper and those of the Dwina, closes, so to speak, the gates of Moscow. By taking up a position, therefore, with the bulk of his forces at Poreczié, behind a region of wood and marsh, and protected by the sinuous and muddy stream of the Kasplia, and free to march upon Sourage, on the banks of the Dwina, or upon Smolensk, on the banks of the Dnieper, Barclay de Tolly would be in a position to await for some days the junction with Bagration, whilst at the same time, covering both the Moscow and St. Petersburg roads; and indeed, the promptitude with which he formed, and the precision with which he executed this plan, are in the highest degree creditable to the military judgment and skill of Barclay de Tolly, and prove that had he been less interfered with, he would have been able to conduct with prudence the operations of this serious and difficult war.

On the morning of the 28th of July, Napoleon, surrounded by his lieutenants, rode to the bank of the Loutcheza, where he hoped to find a new Friedland, and, above all things, that peace which he had so lightly abandoned, and which he now regretted; but his quick eye soon discovered through the skilful manœuvres of the brilliant rear guard conducted by Count Pahlen, that the Russians had retreated to await a battle. Ignorant of the motives which had regulated Barclay de Tolly's actions, he might well have thought that this retreat was intended as a method of enticing the French to a pursuit which should fatigue and exhaust them; but this opinion was rather that of his lieutenants, officers and soldiers, than his own, and he immediately gave orders that the troops, in spite of the heat, which was at 27 or 28 degs. Réaumur, and the fatigues of the preceding days, should hasten forward at their utmost speed, to endeavour to overtake at least some portion of the fugitive army. But Coun



Pahlen's cavalry, although never avoiding the charge of ours, always ended by retreating and yielding the disputed ground.

Our troops had scarcely commenced their march, when they perceived upon the left, on the Dwina, the city of Witebsk, the capital of White Russia, containing about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and a place of some trade. One of our detachments entered it without difficulty, chasing before it the bands of Cossacks which, like ill-omened birds, never retreated without having filled the places through which they passed with unsightly ruin. On this occasion, however, they had only destroyed the principal magazines and the mills, not having had sufficient time to fire the town. But the inhabitants, with the exception of a few priests and merchants, had fled at our approach, terrified by the exaggerated reports which prevailed respecting the atrocities committed by our troops in Poland, and which had no foundation, in fact, as respected the army itself, although too true with respect to isolated bands of pillagers.

Having spent a few minutes in Witebsk and given some indispensable orders, Napoleon hastened to place himself again at the head of his columns, whose path was now strewn with men and horses, overpowered by the heat and the exhaustion resulting from the want of proper nourishment. Our troops continued their march for many leagues on the traces of the Russian army, without meeting a single man from whom any information could be obtained, and it was not until the close of the day that they came up with some Russians, who had been unable to sustain the rapidity of the march, and from the information given by these, and the glimpses which were occasionally obtained of the distant columns, it was presumed that the enemy was retreating partly upon Smolensk, and partly between Smolensk and Sourage, with the intention of effecting a junction with Bagration. The exact information which Napoleon had hitherto received of the movements of the enemy, afforded him all the necessary data for forming an opinion of the projects of the enemy, and at the close of the day, halting at a little place named Haponowtschina, he held a short conference with Murat and Eugene, in which he agreed with them that, as he was so much in advance of us, it would be useless to attempt to prevent the junction of Barclay de Tolly with Bagration; and that a continuance of the pursuit would only oblige these Generals to effect their junction ten or fifteen leagues further back. He agreed, therefore to halt, to afford his troops a few days of repose, to rally the stragglers, and to store in magazines the resources of the country

which the Russians had not had time to destroy ; and having adopted this resolution returned to Witebsk.

Thus had Napoleon's combinations at the opening of this campaign, which were the most brilliant he had ever conceived, been baffled ; although he had vanquished the enemy in every encounter, inflicted a loss upon him of about fifteen thousand in killed, wounded, or prisoners, and deprived him of his best provinces, such as Lithuania and Courland. Some errors in the execution of his plans had, doubtless, contributed to their want of success—such as having crossed the Niemen too hastily, and not having passed at Kowno, before the alarm had been given to the enemy, the time which it had been necessary to devote at Wilna to bringing up the stragglers and baggage ; such as having relied too securely on the junction of King Jerome with Marshal Davoust, and of having too much relied, in short, on men and the elements. But, independently of these faults, his insuccess in itself was a great proof of the imprudence of this war, which he attempted to carry on with soldiers forcibly enlisted from various countries, and compelled to march through immense tracts too barren and too thinly inhabited to supply the necessaries which it was impossible for them to carry with them. At the same time we must remark, that had Napoleon, when he had once been so imprudent as to commence the war, been more imprudent still, and marched straight forward without halting at Wilna to rally his troops and convoys, he might have left many more stragglers in the rear, but he would probably in this case have been enabled to have overwhelmed Barclay de Tolly on the one side and Bagration on the other, and to have struck those terrible blows which would have brought about peace, or at least have given a lustre to this first campaign which would have rendered it unnecessary for him to seek in the depths of Russia those brilliant results which were necessary to preserve his prestige. But we may observe here, as we must observe hereafter, that forming plans too rashly and executing them with too much hesitation, were the fatal errors which caused Napoleon's failure in this war ; that, in fact, if we might venture to say so, had he been more blind, he might have succeeded better. It must be added, that although his health remained unaffected, he seemed to be less active, being more frequently in his carriage than on his horse, either because the heat, or increasing stoutness, had somewhat reduced his physical not mental energy ; because the vastness of the undertaking on which he had entered began somewhat to frighten him, and thus deprive his will of its natural strength and ardour ; or, because, let us say, if we share the superstitions common to

humanity, that fortune, inconstant or fatigued, ceased to second his designs.

Napoleon's inexhaustible military genius was not yet, however, at the end of its resources, and the one hundred and forty thousand men who would be at Barclay de Tolly's command after the junction of the two armies of the Dwina and the Dnieper, could not be invincible before the two hundred and twenty-five thousand who would be at Napoleon's disposal when he should have rallied the troops under Marshal Davoust. At the same time, Lithuania and Courland had already been acquired, and the superiority of the French troops over those of the enemy brilliantly maintained.

Napoleon now installed himself in the palace of the Governor of Witebsk, with his military court; distributing the corps of his army around him in such a manner as to guard against surprise, obtain provisions, and be able to concentrate them immediately on the points on which it might be necessary to act. At Witebsk itself he posted the Imperial guard; somewhat in advance, at Sourage, a little town situated above Witebsk on the Dwina, Prince Eugene; a little to the right, towards Roudnia, in the midst of the space between the Dwina and the Dnieper, Marshal Ney; and in advance of the latter, at all the points at which an enemy might possibly approach, the entire mass of his cavalry. He encamped behind Ney, between Witebsk and Babinowiczi, the three divisions of the first corps, which awaited with impatience the moment in which they should meet the severe but paternal chief, under whom they had been accustomed to serve.

Marshal Davoust had, in fact, ascended the Dnieper after the battle of Mohilew, and was now established at Orscha, where he guarded the Dnieper, as at Witebsk, Napoleon watched the Dwina. He had extended Grouchy's cavalry on his left, so as to form a link of connection in the direction of Bobinowiczi with the main army, and had thrown the light cavalry of Pajol and Bordessoulle on his right, that it might follow and watch beyond the Dnieper the army of Prince Bagration, who was making a great detour by Micislaw with the view of effecting a junction with Barclay de Tolly towards Smolensk. The Polish and Westphalian troops, which were much exhausted, he had placed at Mohilew, and between Mohilew and Orscha respectively. In the meantime, General Latour-Maubourg slowly retired with his exhausted cavalry from Bobruisk upon Mohilew, watching the detached troops of the Russian General Tarmazoff; and Reynier, at the head of the Saxon troops destined to guard the grand duchy met the Austrians, who were on their march towards the grand army.



Napoleon was established, therefore, on the upper Dwina with the guard and Prince Eugene's troops, having between the Dwina and the Dnieper Murat, Ney, and the three first divisions of Marshal Davoust, whilst on the Dnieper itself were the remaining divisions of this Marshal's corps, together with the Westphalians and Poles; and he determined, while thus occupying a position free from liability to attack, to employ himself in supplying the necessities of his soldiers, and to recompose each corps according to its original formation, giving to Prince Eugene Grouchy's cavalry and the Bavarians, to General Montbrun the cuirassiers of General Valence, which had been temporarily lent to Marshal Davoust, to restore to the latter his three first divisions of infantry, and, in addition, to place under his command the Westphalians, the Poles, and the reserve cavalry of General Latour-Maubourg.

According to his custom, Napoleon ordered that the resources of the country should be immediately employed to afford the troops that subsistence which they had wanted during their march and to provide also a reserve of provisions sufficient to last them eight or ten days. As the surrounding country was tolerably well cultivated, and the Russians had not been able to destroy all the magazines, our troops were able to procure a certain amount of provisions; and Napoleon ordered the establishment of magazines, particularly at Witebsk and Orscha, where he determined to place his two principal points d'appui on the Dwina and the Dnieper. At the same time, as there was a great want of hospital accommodation, not only for our wounded, but also for the Russian wounded left in our hands, whom the good and skilful surgeon Larrey, a true hero of humanity, most carefully attended, in order that the enemy might, in turn, bestow some care upon their wounded prisoners, Napoleon took advantage of Davoust's presence at Orscha to have prepared at Orscha, and also at Borisow and Minsk, hospitals capable of receiving twelve thousand patients.

The chiefs of corps had spoken with so much earnestness to him respecting the extent to which the ranks of the army had been thinned by the sufferings attending their march, that, as soon as he had resolved upon a halt at Witebsk, he ordered, for the purpose of learning the real extent of the evil, that a detailed inspection should be made of every corps, from the extreme left to the extreme right, from Marshal Macdonald towards Riga, to General Reynier towards Brezecs, a line of more than two hundred leagues in extent, and the following were the sad results which it made known. Marshal Macdonald, who had under his command the Prussian and Polish troops, which had marched fifty



leagues at the most, and had had to endure but few privations, had only lost six thousand out of thirty thousand. Marshal Oudinot, whose corps, with the division of Doumerc's cuirassiers, which had been detached from Grouchy's cavalry corps, numbered thirty-eight thousand combatants at the passage of the Niemen, had no more than twenty-two or twenty-three thousand men at Polotsk—a terrible diminution, which he attributed to the prevalence of desertion amongst the foreign troops, such as the Croatian, the Swiss, and the Portuguese; the deserters amongst the French troops being only those of the last conscription. Marshal Ney, who was at the head of thirty-six thousand men at the commencement of operations, now declared that he had no more than twenty-two thousand capable of bearing arms; the strangers, in this case, Illyrians and Wurtembergians, being in this corps as in the others the chief cause of the diminution. Murat's cavalry, including the cavalry reserves of General Nansouty and Montbrun, was reduced from twenty-two thousand horsemen, to thirteen or fourteen thousand. The Imperial Guard itself, which had originally numbered thirty-seven thousand men, was now diminished to twenty-seven thousand—this loss of ten thousand being chiefly due to the losses in the ranks of the young infantry and the light cavalry, which was constantly employed in the reconnaissances ordered by the Emperor himself, and to the extraordinary losses of the division Claparède, which had possessed mere skeleton regiments on its withdrawal from Spain, and had been recruited with young Poles, who had almost to a man succumbed to the fatigues of the march or the temptation of desertion. The Old Guard was the only force which retained undiminished strength.

Prince Eugene's troops, which had been estimated at eighty thousand men at the passage of the Niemen, now numbered no more than forty-five thousand. A frightful dysentery had reduced the Bavarians from twenty-seven to thirteen thousand; and their ranks became each day so much thinner by the increase of sickness amongst them, that their corps had been considered unfit for active service, and had been left at Beschenkowicz. The Italian division was the corps which, next to the Bavarian, had suffered most severely from dysentery; and even the Italian guard, which was composed of picked men, had not escaped. The excellent French divisions of Broussier and Delzons had suffered less, having lost only a fourth part of their twenty thousand,—two thousand in engagements with the enemy, and three thousand from sickness and fatigue; and thus offering a very advantageous contrast to the Italian division Pino, which

from eleven thousand had been reduced to five thousand. Marshal Davoust's corps had suffered less than the others, being composed of stronger materials; and if it had had no Dutch, Hamburg, Illyrian, or Spanish troops in its ranks, would have suffered scarcely the loss of a sixteenth part of its effective strength. In consequence, however, of the presence of these troops and of refractory recruits in its regiments, its effective strength had been reduced from seventy-two thousand to about fifty-two thousand. Finally, Jerome's corps, which was composed of the Westphalian, Polish, and Saxon troops, together with Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, had lost eight thousand of its thirty thousand Poles, eight thousand of its eighteen thousand Westphalians, and four thousand of its seventeen thousand Saxons, whilst Latour-Maubourg's cavalry had been reduced from ten thousand to about six thousand.

Thus the army in the field, which at the passage of the Niemen had consisted of four hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms, and four hundred and twenty-five thousand including the artillery, engineer, and transport corps, now numbered no more than two hundred and fifty-five thousand. At the same time, it must be observed that there were one hundred and forty thousand men forming a second line between the Niemen and the Rhine, and from fifty to sixty thousand sick in the various hospitals in Germany and Poland; from whom very serviceable reinforcements might very probably be drawn.

Leaving sixty thousand men under Marshals Macdonald and Oudinot on the Dwina, and twenty thousand under General Reynier on the Dnieper, Napoleon would be able therefore to advance with an army of one hundred and seventy-five thousand men. A force which would speedily be increased by the thirty thousand Austrians of Prince Schwarzenberg, who were already on their march towards Minsk, and in the rear of which thirty thousand more might be marched from the one hundred and forty thousand men écheloned between the Niemen and the Rhine. But although this was doubtless a force quite capable of inflicting decisive blows upon an enemy, it was no less a cruel misfortune, after having been in the field no more than a month, and having fought no great battle, to be reduced to such proportions.

We have already pointed out the causes of this marvellous diminution, and the last marches rendered them still more apparent. The army of Italy had marched from March to July six hundred leagues, and the army which set out from the Rhine five hundred. One hundred and fifty thousand horses had been employed in the transport of munitions and

stores, but one half had already perished from the want of food for themselves, and a considerable portion of our baggage train had been necessarily abandoned on the roads. The privations resulting from this cause, added to the fatigue of long and continued marches, had prevented many even of those who were ardent soldiers, from following their corps, and the foreign troops, who had little inclination for serving in our ranks, although they fought well when in action under our eyes, from a feeling of vanity, had not the least scruple when they were fatigued or indisposed in remaining in the rear, having in the forests of Poland a safe retreat. Some of these perished in the hospitals, and some became brigands, but the greater number passed through Germany, favoured by the inhabitants, and returned to their homes. Next to the foreigners, the young soldiers and refractory troops were the most inclined to quit their ranks, and the regiments, in fact, at length only consisted of veteran soldiers, together with a few whom a military temperament had thoroughly associated with the spirit of the old troops. But it was the probable effect of the example of desertion thus offered, which was more to be dreaded than the loss of one hundred and fifty thousand men, which had already resulted from it, and Napoleon feeling it to be so, took the most minute and profoundly calculated precautions against the calamities which might arise from this cause.

As the Gendarmerie d'élite consisted of about three or four hundred, which ordinarily exercised the functions of police in the rear of the army, appeared to be insufficient for this duty, notwithstanding that it was assisted by the columns mobile, Napoleon ordered that all the troops still remaining in the dépôts of the guard, should be sent from Paris to head quarters. He created, moreover, and by this measure showed his opinion of the bad state of the army, two inspectors, who, under the titles of *aides-major-generaux* of infantry and cavalry, were to watch narrowly and constantly the condition of these two arms of the service, to learn the exact force of each regiment at the moment of each action, and to superintend, above all things, the little dépôts left by the army on its route. The two officers chosen by Napoleon for the fulfilment of these duties were excellently selected, whether we consider their vigilance or their acquaintance with the species of troops they would have to superintend; and were, for the infantry Count Labau, for the cavalry Count Durosnel. But unfortunately the multiplication of officials can no more of itself remedy abuses, than the multiplication of physicians can of itself heal the sick; and Napoleon much more reasonably sought during this halt at Witebsk, a remedy for the



disorganised state of the army, in bringing up the stragglers and convoys which had fallen in the rear, and collecting a fresh reserve of provisions. At the same time, in the hope of renewing the spirit of discipline amongst the troops, he determined to review them himself in the *place* of Witebsk, and had some of the surrounding houses pulled down for the purpose of rendering it sufficiently large for the purpose. He first inspected the various brigades of the Imperial Guard, examining them most minutely, and addressing the soldiers and officers in language calculated to arouse in their hearts the most noble sentiments. During one of these reviews he received General Friant in the character of colonel commandant of the foot grenadiers of the guard, a post which had become vacant by the death of General Dorsenne, and embracing the General, who was one of the most accomplished and valuable officers France possessed, said to him, "My dear Friant, you must not assume your new command until the end of the campaign, for these soldiers themselves know how to perform their duty, and you must remain with your division, where you may still render me important services. You are, in fact, one of those men whom I wish to place wherever I cannot be myself."

In the meantime the impossibility of coming up with the enemy, was the general subject of bitter expressions of regret amongst generals, officers, and soldiers. "Still the cowards fly!" cried the soldiers, but the remarks of the officers on this subject, were to the effect that the Russians desired to entice us on, until fatigue and exhaustion should have so reduced our numbers, as to enable them to attack us at an advantage. This latter idea was also generally shared by the chiefs of the army, and it was generally asked in the circle immediately surrounding Napoleon, whether it were not time to check the movement in advance, now that the army had reached the true border between Europe and Asia, to take up a solid position on the Dwina and the Dnieper, to fortify Witebsk and Smolensk, to take Riga on the left, to extend the right wing as far as Volhynia and Podolia, for the purpose of arousing these provinces to revolt, to organise an army and a government for Poland, and to prepare winter cantonments in which the troops might wait, reorganised, well armed, and well fed, until the Russians should advance against them, prepared to give battle for the recovery of Poland.

There was considerable good sense in these ideas, but they elicited, nevertheless, very strong objections from Napoleon. In the first place, he said, cantonments were not so easily established as was implied; for the Dnieper and the Dwina



which now appeared to be a protecting frontier, would no longer be so when for a time obliterated, as within the space of three months they would be, by ice and snow; "and how then," he asked, "could such positions as Dunabourg, Polotsk, Witebsk, Smolensk, Orscha, and Mohilew, distant from each other about thirty and forty leagues, and but slightly fortified, be defended against troops whom winter was so far from disabling, that it rather facilitated their movements? How again, could the French troops, naturally so active, and so accustomed in the campaigns in which they had so lately been engaged, to rapid movements, be restrained during nine whole months, from the August of the current year to the June of the following year; whilst moreover, there could be no certain hope of their obtaining fit and sufficient food for so long an interval. And how," he continued, "would it be possible to explain to Europe the close in August of a campaign which had begun in June? Would it not be generally regarded as a sign of weakness, and be the cause of hostile movements in the rear of the French army? And would not Spain immediately become fertile in sources of embarrassment, which, comparatively of little moment, while the grand army was between the Elbe and the Rhine, would become very serious when it should be confined with its chief, for an indefinite time between the Niemen and the Barysthène." Such were the objections addressed by Napoleon to those who considered a position on the Dnieper and the Dwina as a sufficient result of the campaign; and there were many other objections to the plea urged by the latter, of which he was well aware, but which he refrained from mentioning; for if it were his nature to plunge into inextricable difficulties, he was most quick to discover those difficulties when he was once amongst them, and if he denied their existence it was not because he was ignorant of them, but because he was averse to owning his errors, and because he calculated that by denying their truth, he could in some degree diminish their reality. He knew, for example, although he was far from confessing it, that his popularity began to decline even in France, that a spirit of exasperation against him prevailed throughout Europe, and that amongst the troops, who formed his most faithful adherents, a certain degree of coldness and distrust towards him were the result of the fatigues to which he had exposed them.

Napoleon, however, by no means wholly discarded the idea of making the limits of Europe the limit also of his expedition, but he was willing only to put it into execution after having performed, as he hoped a halt of fifteen days

would enable him to do, some brilliant action, which would permit him to pause on the confines of Moscovy, without exciting distrust of his power in France, or elsewhere. In the meantime, projecting new and decisive operations, he directed in accordance with them, the movements of the corps which were not to share in the halt at Witebsk. We have seen above that he had ordered Marshal Oudinot to march upon the Count de Wittgenstein, to push him upon Sebej, the St. Petersburg route by Pskow, in order to disengage the left of the grand army; that he had ordered Marshal Macdonald to support the movement of Marshal Oudinot, marching on the lower Dwina, in order to take Dunabourg and make preparations for the siege of Riga, which would secure not only the peaceable occupation of Courland, but probably the possession also of the two strong points of defence of Dunabourg and Riga. We have also seen that in the direction of the Dnieper he had ordered General Reynier with the Saxons, Prince Schwarzenberg with the Austrians, to march to Brezese or Kobrin, and Minsk, respectively; Reynier having to cover the Grand Duchy, and to rouse Volhynia to revolt.

Marshal Oudinot had successively defiled before Dunabourg, Drissa, and Polotsk, and had finally passed the Dwina at Polotsk itself, having first, in accordance with Napoleon's orders, left his third division, composed of Swiss, Illyrians, and Dutch, under General Merle, at the Drissa camp, for the purpose of destroying its works; but the hands of these troops, enfeebled by exhaustion and unfurnished with tools (for the engineer matériel remained in the rear), had been able to make but very little progress in this important work of demolition, when the Marshal, finding himself far too weak before Wittgenstein's corps, which had been increased by the reinforcements of Prince Repnin to thirty thousand men, had recalled them to his corps. In order to conform to the order to push on to Sebej, on the St. Petersburg route, he had advanced a portion of his light cavalry on the 28th of July upon the little river, the Drissa, one of the tributaries of the Dwina, and had successively echeloned his first and second divisions with the cuirassiers between the Drissa and Polotsk. For the purpose of guarding against the Russian troops under Wittgenstein, posted beyond the Drissa, in a direction almost perpendicular to his left flank, he had posted at Lazowka, the remainder of his light division and the foreign division of General Merle. On the 29th he had made a step in advance, having crossed the Drissa at Sivotschina ford, carried his advanced guard near to Kliastitsoui, ranged his two chief divisions a little in the rear, and left the division

Merle to guard the Sivotschina ford; some detachments of cavalry and light infantry connecting it with Polotsk.

Such was Oudinot's position on the 29th of July, the second day of the entry of the grand army into Witebsk, and on that day, determined cavalry charges made by the enemy on the head and rear of his column, left him in no doubt with respect to the offensive projects of the enemy. At the same time, two Russian officers who fell into our hands, informed him that Count de Wittgenstein was marching diagonally towards him, with the intention of striking him a severe blow at Kliastitsoui, and with the intention of providing against this projected attack he advanced as far as the village and chateau of Iakoubowo, situated at the entrance of a little plain surrounded by wood. On the morning of the 29th, Wittgenstein débouched on this plain and furiously attacked the village and chateau, which Oudinot on his part defended with the first brigade of Legrand's division, placing the 26th leger in Iakoubowo itself, and posting the 56th of the line a little to the left, in connection with the wood, whilst he kept in reserve the second brigade commanded by General Maison. The contest was very desperate on each side, and at one moment the Russians had penetrated into the village of Iakoubowo, and even into the court of the chateau, but two companies of the 26th rushing upon them, drove them out at the bayonet's point, and killing two or three hundred of them, took prisoners about as many more. In every direction our troops drove back the enemy, but the numerous and well-served artillery of the latter on the edge of the wood, prevented the former from venturing to continue the combat there, Marshal Davoust being unwilling to risk so difficult an attack whilst he was uncertain with respect to the course of events in the rear. The Marshal feared, in fact—and with good reason—that whilst resisting the enemy at the head of his column, he might be taken in reverse and cut off from Polotsk, where were deposited his artillery and matériel. Under these circumstances he believed it would be wiser to retreat upon the Drissa, to recross it by the Sivotschina ford, and in that position to await the enemy.

Executing this retrograde movement on the 31st, Marshal Oudinot occupied a position on the evening of that day beyond the Sivotschina, having tirailleurs along the Drissa, the two divisions Legrand and Verdier at some distance in the rear, the cuirassiers in a position from whence they could support the infantry, and the division Merle in observation in the direction of Polotsk. Our tirailleurs were ordered, should the Russians pass the Drissa, to resist them only so much as might be necessary to entice them on, and to give

immediate information at head quarters of their approach. On the night of the 31st of July, the Russians marched upon the Drissa, and on the following morning began imprudently to effect its passage. This was the moment for which Marshal Oudinot had waited, and he immediately threw upon them in succession, the first and second divisions of the brigade Legrand.

As soon as our troops encountered the Russians they completely defeated them, killing or wounding about two thousand, and taking more than two thousand prisoners, together with a portion of their artillery. The division Verdier was sent in pursuit of the flying enemy, and crossing the Drissa, permitted its ardour to carry it too far, and thus, whilst making many prisoners, unfortunately left some of its own men in the hands of the enemy, when it became necessary to repass the Drissa. In spite, however, of the trivial advantage thus obtained by the Russians, the events of the day could not but be to them a most serious check; and Marshal Oudinot being convinced that they would prevent the Russians for some time from venturing to attack him, and considering himself not sufficiently strong with twenty-four thousand exhausted troops, withdrew from the Dwina, resolved to return to Polotsk where were his munitions and stores, and where he could await in safety, until the cessation of the extreme heat which had compelled Napoleon himself to halt at Witebsk. The only disadvantage attending this place was, that by withdrawing to Polotsk from the position he then occupied, five or six leagues in advance of it, he resigned the moral effect of the success he had obtained.

In the meantime, Marshal Macdonald with the Polish division Grandjean, and the seventeen thousand Prussians which had been placed under his command, had advanced upon the Dwina and obtained possession of Courland, by means of a rapid march. The Russians, retreating, had been taken in flank by the Prussians, and having suffered a severe blow at the hands of the latter, had precipitately fallen back upon Riga, resigning to us Mitau and the whole of Courland. It is a fact worthy of remark, that the Prussians, who detested us and were unwilling soldiers in our cause, were yet so excited by our presence, that they fought almost as well for us as they could have fought against us. And we must add, that whilst the troops furnished by the small allied states, such as Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and Westphalia, were much thinned by desertion, the Prussian and Austrian troops were retained in their ranks by true military spirit, and did not desert from us until they abandoned us *en masse*, in accordance with a change in their national policy.



Marshal Macdonald undertook the blockade of Riga with the Russian troops, and at the same time with the Polish division Grandjean approached Dunabourg, which the Russians, being unwilling to scatter their forces, very speedily yielded, and thereby much simplified the task which the Marshal had to perform; but it was still a task which would most probably occupy a considerable time, and possibly the whole campaign. He had been compelled to leave in the neighbourhood of Tilsit and Memel for the purpose of guarding the navigation of the Niemen and the Kurischschaff, and in the environs of Mitau for the purpose of guarding Courland, five thousand men of the Prussian corps, and he had therefore been able to retain only ten thousand before Riga, the works of which were very extensive, and which contained a garrison of fifteen thousand men. The Polish division Grandjean, which was the other force at his command, was reduced from twelve thousand men to eight thousand, and was the only force he had with which to watch the space between Riga and Polotsk—about seventy leagues in extent.

He hastened to send information, couched in sensible but somewhat ironical terms, of the situation in which he was placed, and to declare that unless he received a considerable reinforcement, he could not succeed either in the capture of Riga or in maintaining relations with Oudinot's corps. The most simple proposition he could have made, considering his position, would have been that a junction should be effected between his own corps and that of Marshal Oudinot, since Wittgenstein's corps could then, doubtless, have been vanquished, and the Niemen consequently protected from the enemy's approach; and although, in this case, Riga could not have been even besieged, much less taken, still we should have obtained a decided superiority on the left wing of our line of operations. Instead, however, of proposing this junction of the two corps, which was possible and even necessary, but which would have required on his part rare disinterestedness, for he would then have been under Oudinot's command, he demanded a reinforcement which there was no possibility of his obtaining.

In the meantime, on the other extremity of the vast theatre of the war, a hundred and fifty leagues to the south east, towards the upper course of the Bug, certain events were occurring which could not fail to produce certain changes in Napoleon's plans; General Reynier had retreated with the Saxons from Neswij to Slonim, and from Slonim to Provjany, for the purpose of covering the Grand Duchy, and subsequently invading Volhynia, whilst Prince Schwarzenberg had marched with the Austrian army from Provjany to Slonim

and Neswij, on his way to the head quarters of the French army, in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor of Austria, who was unwilling that his troops should be commanded by any one but Napoleon himself, and much to the dissatisfaction of Napoleon, who was unwilling to trust the defence of his rear to an Austrian army.

At this same moment, which was that also of Napoleon's entrance into Witebsk, the Russian General Tarmazoff commenced his march to threaten, as he had been ordered, the right flank of the French, which was a task Bagration could no longer perform, since he had to join the grand army, and at the head of forty thousand men he had marched boldly towards the upper course of the Bug, whilst Admiral Tchitchakoff, engaged in vast plans on the side of Turkey, was either to execute them or to descend upon Poland. As a precaution against the attempts which might be made by the Austrians assembled in Galicia against his rear, he had spread about twelve thousand men from Bobruisk to Mozyr and from Mozyr to Kiew, with Prince Bagration on one side and Admiral Tchitchakoff on the other; for although the Court of Vienna had assured the government at St. Petersburg that its exertions in favour of France would be confined to the providing the contingent of thirty thousand men under Prince Schwarzenberg, General Tarmazoff was unwilling to advance without taking precautions against the possible results of Austrian policy. Having left, therefore, in his rear, the force above mentioned, he had advanced with about twenty-eight thousand men upon the Upper Bug, threatening the Grand Duchy, which General Reynier had to defend with about twelve or thirteen thousand Saxons, and, being informed by the Jews, who on every occasion betrayed the cause of Poland, of the presence of a Saxon detachment which was, unfortunately, unsupported, at Kobrin, he determined to signalise his approach by its destruction; and, on the 27th of July, effected this object, compelling it to yield after a fierce struggle, and thus inflicting a loss upon the Saxons of two thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

The moral effects of this misfortune, were more disastrous than the actual loss incurred by it, and produced a most unfortunate impression at Warsaw; for the wretched Poles who had entertained with so much ardour the project of a general insurrection, on learning that the Russian troops were so near them, immediately began to tremble at the idea of exile and sequestration, and many of them set the dangerous example of collecting the most precious portion of their property, and passing to the left bank of the Vistula. Much as they had rejoiced in the war which Napoleon was waging against

Russia, they now reproached him with having imprudently advanced beyond the Dwina and the Dnieper, and left them unprotected. They complained, also, on this occasion of the cold tone of his reply to their address at Wilna, imputing to its reserve their own want of zeal, and forgetting that it was for them to excite by the manifestation of enthusiasm on their side, the enthusiasm of Napoleon in their behalf.

In the midst of the complaints which now arose in Warsaw, and the demands for instant succour which he could not afford, M. de Pradt possessed no greater presence of mind than he had displayed during the excitement attending the meeting of the diet, and had recourse to the only measure which had suggested itself to his mind, and which was to write to M. de Bassano and General Reynier, requiring the despatch of troops from Warsaw. General Reynier, who had to fulfil a task very different from the defence of Warsaw, having to make head against thirty thousand Russians with eleven thousand Saxons, replied to the Prelate Ambassador to this effect; and by an urgent letter, entreated Prince Schwarzenberg to fall back in order to aid him to repulse the enemy, and to defer the continuance of his march towards the French head-quarters until the Russians should have been checked, and such a position occupied by our troops behind the Pinsk marshes as would prevent their advance. Prince Schwarzenberg replied that he perceived the danger of the situation, and that, notwithstanding the orders which he had received, he would fall back in order to afford him support. In the meantime, M. de Bassano replied somewhat ironically to M. de Pradt's expressions of terror, and being unable to take any measures with respect to them, forwarded all the demands for aid to head-quarters.

Napoleon was extremely annoyed by the news of these events, and especially irritated against the persons who had permitted themselves to be so easily terrified. He approved thoroughly of the determination taken by Prince Schwarzenberg to fall back upon Provjany for the purpose of affording support to General Reynier, and placed the latter under the Austrian commander's orders. He directed Prince Schwarzenberg to march boldly with the forty thousand men he would now have at his disposal, against Tarmazoff, who had no more than thirty thousand, and not to desist from attacking him until he should have driven him into Volhynia; at the same time promising that as soon as this task should have been accomplished, he would recall him to head-quarters in accordance with the wishes of the Emperor of Austria, to whom he wrote for a reinforcement for the Austrian corps, and to request that the Austrian corps which was at this time



in Galicia, might be authorised to assume a threatening attitude on the side of Volhynia, which would act as a restraint upon General Tarmazoff's movements; but as he had but little expectation of being successful in this application, he insisted more particularly on a reinforcement of seven or eight thousand men for Prince Schwarzenberg.

These measures were perfectly sufficient to hold Tarmazoff's corps in check, and even to render it perfectly harmless unless Admiral Tchitchakoff should speedily double its strength. As, however, it was necessary that he should maintain communications with the Austrians and Saxons under Schwarzenberg, which would be at least a hundred leagues distant from Orscha, the point on which rested the right of the grand army, Napoleon consented to deprive himself of one of Prince Poniatowski's divisions that it might remain in cantonments between Minsk and Mohilew to secure us against sudden attacks from the Cossacks, and be connected by means of cavalry posts with the left of the Austrian corps.

Our right was thus, for the moment at least, rendered safe, but with respect to the left, Napoleon took measures which were less efficacious, although apparently sufficient. Neglecting to take into account the state of his troops, he blamed Marshal Oudinot's retrograde march upon Polotsk, and endeavoured to prove to the Marshal by very ingenious calculations founded on documents taken from the Russians, that Count Wittgenstein could not have more than thirty thousand troops, of very indifferent quality, at his command, and could not, therefore, be a source of terror to twenty thousand French veterans, and ordered him to march boldly against the enemy for the purpose of driving him far back upon the St. Petersburg route. That the Marshal might have no grounds for objecting to these orders, he resolved to send him the Bavarian corps, which was—as were all the troops furnished by the allies—very effective in action, although much weakened by fatigue, sickness, and desertion. Napoleon continued to consider the corps as numbering fifteen or sixteen thousand men, although it really numbered only thirteen thousand, and estimated that the troops at Marshal Oudinot's disposal would be raised by this reinforcement to forty thousand men, a force which he hoped would be quite sufficient to free him from Wittgenstein on his left, whilst the junction of Prince Schwarzenberg and General Reynier would, he calculated, relieve him from the presence of Tarmazoff on his right. But whilst making these arrangements, Napoleon fully expected that the movements he was about to execute with the main army, would reduce to insignificance any events which



might occur on his wings. Believing that Marshal Oudinot would be able to drive back Wittgenstein upon Sebej and Pskow; he also concluded that Marshal Macdonald would immediately afterwards be able to concentrate his whole corps upon Riga, and to commence its siege.

In the meantime, Napoleon had not ceased to keep a careful watch on his rear, the command of which had been entrusted to Marshal Victor and Marshal Angereau; the former being posted in the direction of Königsberg, and the latter in that of Berlin.

He had made great exertions to procure for Marshal Victor twenty-five thousand infantry, three or four thousand cavalry, and sixty pieces of cannon, and had entertained the idea of speedily summoning him to Wilna, that he might, if circumstances rendered it necessary, be ready to afford assistance to Marshal Macdonald, Marshal Oudinot, or Prince Schwarzenberg. At the same time he was equally engaged in the organisation of the fourth battalions, the regiments of refractory recruits intended to be placed under Marshal Angereau's command, the cohorts of the national guards which were to replace on the frontiers of the empire the troops carried to Berlin, and the Lithuanian regiments, which he desired to raise to the number of twelve thousand men. The ten days, therefore, that Napoleon had already spent at Witebsk had not been lost, and had, besides enabling his troops to pass a season of extreme heat under shelter, afforded him the opportunity of bringing up a large portion of the artillery, which had fallen into the rear, and of collecting thirteen hundred baggage waggons at Witebsk, and between that place and Kowno; a number sufficient for the transport of provisions for two hundred thousand men for ten or twelve days; whilst it in like manner afforded Prince Eugene, Ney, and Davoust, the opportunity of collecting a store of provisions sufficient for six or seven days' consumption, in addition to the troops daily subsistence.

Every preparation having been made for the execution of the new movement from which Napoleon hoped to obtain some decisive result, he resolved upon the adoption of that plan of action which appeared to him to be at this time the only practicable one, and the conception of which was quite worthy of his genius. Although he had failed to prevent the junction of the armies of Prince Bagration and Barclay de Tolly, it still remained possible to turn them, take them in reverse, and thus render it impossible for them to avoid meeting our troops in a decisive action, and under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Napoleon resolved, therefore, to take advantage of the tract of wood and marsh which separated him

from the Russians, and to effect a clandestine movement in front of them from left to right, similar to that which he had proposed to execute in front of the Drissa camp, to proceed from the banks of the Dwina to those of the Dnieper, from Witebsk to Rassasna, to cross the Dnieper, to ascend it rapidly as far as Smolensk, to surprise this town (which was in an undefended state), and to debouch from hence suddenly with the entire mass of his forces upon the left of the Russians, who would thus find themselves out-flanked and turned. And then, should fortune smile upon him as she had so often smiled, he might be able to execute against Bagration and Barclay de Tolly united, the plans he had formerly directed against Barclay alone, and probably force Russia to accept terms of peace, which would leave her completely humbled and the sceptre of the world in his hands.

An inconvenience, however, attending this movement, consisted in the fact that, although well covered by the wooded, marshy nature of the country, it would be of great length, for the right of the army, which was under Marshal Davoust at Rassasna, would have to march thirty leagues to reach Smolensk. and the left, which was with Prince Eugene at Sourage, would have to accomplish almost as long a journey to replace Marshal Davoust at Rassasna, and it would only be after the completion of their movements, that our troops would even have begun to approach the enemy's left. It was quite possible, indeed, to shorten this route considerably, by resigning the capture of Smolensk, and turning at a point closer to the enemy, whom it was intended to envelope; but to adopt this plan of action would only be to exchange one plan of action for another, to exchange, in fact, the difficulty of surprising the Russians, for the difficulty of overwhelming their left, at this moment formed by the valiant Bagration, so suddenly and so victoriously as to prevent the remainder of the army from escaping us. Before finally forming his resolution, Napoleon consulted Marshal Davoust as the most capable of advising him on this important subject, and the best qualified, moreover, by the position he occupied, to appreciate the relative position of the two armies; and after having heard his views on the subject, finally decided upon the more protracted movement, which consisted in crossing the Dwina, ascending its left bank, taking Smolensk, and suddenly debouching on the left of the Russian army, thus surprised and out-flanked.

Having resolved upon the execution of this excellent and extensive manœuvre, Napoleon ordered every preparation to be made for the departure of the troops on the 10th or 11th of August. Marshal Davoust was to rally his three divisions,

Morand, Friant, and Gudin, to unite them with the divisions Dessaix and Compans, the Poles, and the Westphalians, and to hold himself in readiness to cover, together with Grouchy's cavalry, the *debouches* of Rassasna and Liady, near which it was decided that the army should pass the Dnieper. The cavalry of Montbrun and Nansouty, under Murat, and the corps of Marshal Ney, were to proceed by Liosna and Fioubawicz to Liady and Rassasna, and to cross the Dnieper close to Marshal Davoust, whom they would thus reinforce with thirty-six thousand men. Finally, Prince Eugene and the Guard, departing from Sourage and Witebsk respectively, to pass by Babinowicz and Rassasna, would increase by fifty-five thousand men, the Guard numbering twenty-five thousand, and Prince Eugene's troops thirty thousand, that portion of the French army which was capable of being marched forward, and which, with Latour-Maubourg's five or six thousand horse, numbered a hundred and seventy-five thousand.

Napoleon left at Witebsk, for the purpose of guarding so important a point on the Dwina, and still more as a protection for his magazines and hospitals there, about six or seven thousand troops who were speedily to join the main army, being replaced at Witebsk by others, so that there might be there, as at Wilna, a garrison mobile.

In the meantime, the Russians were making preparations for the execution of a plan which was less well concerted than Napoleon's, and less likely to succeed. Prince Bagration had united with the principal army by Smolensk, the forty-five thousand men who remained of his force, and thus raised to one hundred and thirty-five thousand or one hundred and forty thousand men, the main army under Barclay de Tolly. A portion of Alexander's plan for the campaign still remained in force, and was that which proposed that the Russian troops should retreat before the French army, watching to take advantage of any errors which it might commit. Such errors the enemy now supposed that they saw in the apparent dispersion of our cantonments, which, extending from Sourage by Witebsk, Liosna and Babinowicz, to Doubrowna, were to their eyes spread over a space of thirty leagues, since they were ignorant that behind the tract of wooded and marshy country which separated them from our troops, were posted, Murat with his fourteen thousand horse, and Ney with twenty-two thousand infantry, all admirable troops, and capable of being joined within the space of a few hours by the thirty thousand men of the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin. Since they were ignorant, moreover, that the twenty-five thousand troops of



Prince Eugene and the thirty thousand of the Guard, could be received in flank. And since such troops and such generals, posted with such skill, could not be easily surprised or routed by an unexpected attack on one of their cantonments.

Although the Russian Generals, who formed rather a military oligarchy than a staff subject to a single Commander-in-Chief, were forced to perceive the wisdom of retreating before the French troops until they should have been sufficiently exhausted, they did so very unwillingly, and were ever eager to find some favourable opportunity for a battle. Prince Bagration's natural ardour placed him at the head of those who were eager for an engagement with the enemy; and generally, throughout the army, those who still insisted on the wisdom of a continued retreat, were accused of cowardice. Barclay de Tolly feigned to bear the insults which were heaped upon him on this account with indifference; but in reality he felt them deeply. On the 5th of August, however, he called a council of war, at which were present, besides the two Generals-in-Chief, Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, the Grand Duke Constantine, General Yermolof and Colonel Toll, the former chief of the staff, and the latter quarter-master-general of the first army, the Count de Saint Priest, chief of the staff of the second, and Colonel Wolzogen, the most prominent representative of the system of retreat. Colonel Toll urged with the enthusiasm which was natural to him, and with the success always obtained by those who speak in accordance with the prevailing tendency of men's minds the expediency of acting on the offensive; and it was in vain that Barclay de Tolly and Wolzogen, set forth the advantages of a retreat which would entice the French into the depths of Russia, and enable the Russian armies to attack them when so exhausted as to render them an easy conquest. The members of the council either could not or would not see the force of this reasoning, and they very openly displayed to Barclay de Tolly, who was a foreigner in name, and to Colonel Wolzogen, who was a foreigner both in name and reality, the distrust with which this advice was received, and immediately resolved against all reason, that an offensive plan of action should be immediately adopted. It is seldom that men can retain their good sense when exposed to the influence of a dominant idea. Before the war, the tendency to imitation had inclined every one to the adoption of a plan of retreat similar to that executed by Lord Wellington in Portugal; and now, since the commencement of actual hostilities, the patriotic spirit had rendered the same minds eager for battles. Barclay de Tolly yielded to the prevailing opinion, and it was at length resolved



to attack the enemy on the 7th of August, in three columns ; two of these columns, composed of troops of the main army advancing by the upper Kasplia upon Inkowo, against Murat's cantonments, which were supposed to present the feeblest point in the midst of the French line, and the third column, composed of troops of the second army, advancing under Prince Bagration from Smolensk upon Nadwa, to second the efforts of the two others.

On the 7th, the troops commenced their march in conformity with the plan which had been adopted, and on the 8th, a strong advance guard, consisting of Platow's Cossacks, and Pahlen's cavalry, approached Inkowo, where General Sebastiani was cantoned with Montbrun's light cavalry and a battalion of the 24th leger belonging to Ney's corps. General Sebastiani, who was endowed with more political than military sagacity, had permitted the enemy to approach, only sending word to his chief, General Montbrun, that his advanced posts had been so much contracted since the evening, that he feared he might find it difficult to provide his troops with rations. On receiving this intimation, Montbrun had immediately hastened up to behold twelve thousand of the enemy's cavalry pouring down upon the three thousand of General Sebastiani. The battalion of the 24th, led by an energetic officer, held the enemy in check for a considerable time, and Generals Montbrun and Sebastiani charged them more than forty times in the course of the day, but at length, after having lost between four and five hundred men, including an entire company of the 24th, they succeeded in gaining Marshal Ney's cantonment, where they were effectually protected from the enemy, who accordingly halted, convinced by this attempt, that, if some of the French outposts were not at this moment on their guard, it would, nevertheless be impossible to surprise the main army. They perceived even on the side of Poreczié—opposite the cantonments of Prince Eugene—signs of extreme vigilance, and considerable masses of troops, which induced Barclay de Tolly to believe that the French had changed their position and had fallen back on their left, to turn the right of the Russians in the direction of the sources of the Dwina, and to cut them off from the road to St. Petersburg. Seized with this fear, Barclay de Tolly, who was advancing with extreme unwillingness, sent a general order from one wing to the other, prescribing a retrograde movement to his two principal columns, which they immediately obeyed, that they might execute a strong reconnaissance on his right. And it was fortunate that he took this measure, for had he continued to advance he would have been attacked by one hundred and twenty thousand men approaching from the Dwina, thus

driven upon the fifty-five thousand who guarded the Dnieper, and most probably have been utterly overthrown between them. In the meantime, Bagration remained in advance of Smolensk, in the direction of Nadwa.

The information of these movements of the enemy reached head quarters on the 9th of August, and were somewhat difficult of explanation, but Napoleon was so eager to meet the Russian troops in battle, that he was indifferent to the circumstances under which he might do so. Having Murat and Ney on his right, and somewhat in advance towards Liosna; the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, in the rear, and being himself in a position to advance with Prince Eugene's troops and the Guard, he was confident of being able to overwhelm the Russians, and, driving them to the Dnieper, to throw them by thousands into the hands of Davoust. He ordered the whole army to be on the alert, and seemed to await the development of the enemy's designs before undertaking his grand manœuvre. But the 9th and 10th of August having passed without any visible decided movements on the part of the Russians, he supposed that the recent movements which had attracted his attention, had been mere changes of cantonments, and he put his army in motion on the 11th and 12th of August. On the morning of the 11th, the corps of Murat, Ney, and Eugene, the three divisions Morand, Friant and Gudin, commenced their march, preceded by General Eblé with the pontoon equipage. Murat and Ney defiled behind the woods and marshes, which extend from Liosna to Lioubawiczi, and reached the bank of the Dnieper opposite Liady. Prince Eugene followed Murat and Ney at the distance of a day's march, by Sourage, Ianowiczy, Liosna, and Lioubowiczi; and the divisions Morand, Friant, and Gudin, advanced by Babinowiczi to Rassasna, where they crossed the Dnieper by four bridges which had previously been thrown across it. The Guard had followed them. During the evening and night of the 13th, the whole army effected the passage of the Dnieper, and on the morning of the 14th one hundred and seventy-five thousand troops were assembled on its further bank, full of confidence, with Napoleon at their head, and believing that they were marching to obtain an immediate and decisive triumph. Never had so many men, horses, and cannon, been really assembled at the same point; for when historians speak of an army of a hundred thousand men, and it is but seldom, it would be a mistake to suppose that a hundred thousand were actually present under arms, the truth being in all probability, that the real number was no more than a moiety of the supposed one. The enormous crowd of men, animals, and waggons,

actually present, was indeed extraordinary, and at first appeared to be involved in inextricable confusion, which soon, however, yielded before the spirit of order breathed through the entire mass, by the governing mind which directed it. The sun had dried the roads, and the army advanced across immense plains covered with heavy crops, along a broad road, bordered by four rows of birch trees, and under a sun of unobscured brilliancy, but less intensely warm than it had latterly been. In the meantime, whilst the troops were ascending the left bank of the Dnieper and executing one of the most brilliant movements that had ever been accomplished, and advancing to turn the left of the Russian forces, they were seeking us on their right.

On the morning of the 14th, Murat, with the cavalry of Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, preceded by that of General Grouchy, marched upon Krasnoé. Ney followed with his light infantry; and everything proceeded in this direction as well as could be desired. Napoleon had ordered a movement in advance, ascending the Dnieper in the direction of Smolensk.

A little in advance of Krasnoé the enemy first became visible; the troops which were then seen being those of the division Névéroffskoi, numbering five or six thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry, and placed by Prince Bagration, in observation at Krasnoé, for the purpose of protecting Smolensk against the possible attempts of Marshal Davoust. Situated on the left of the Dnieper, whilst Bagration and the whole Russian army were on the right, it was a position of considerable danger, and being attacked by Bordesoulle's and Grouchy's light cavalry was driven into Krasnoé, whence it was again driven at the bayonet's point by some companies of the 24th léger under Ney. Still pursuing the enemy, our troops were stopped by a river, the bridge across which had been broken, but although the artillery was compelled to halt, the cavalry turned to the left, and traversing the bank of the ravine, found a place at which they were able to cross it, and immediately set out in pursuit of the Russian troops, which, formed by General Névéroffskoi into a compact square, were hastening forward along a road leading to Smolensk, and bordered by birch trees, of which they made skilful use as a defence against the attacks of our cavalry. Taking advantage of our want of artillery the enemy overwhelmed us with the fire of its own, at every halt but on the other hand, whenever the nature of the ground compelled the Russians to break the square, for the purpose of defiling, our squadrons seized the opportunity to charge, and penetrating it, took both men and cannon. Nevertheless,



constantly reforming, as soon as the obstacle had been passed, this body of Russian infantry retreated, defending their colours and artillery against the incessant attacks of a swarm of cavalry, and reached the town of Korytnia, having inflicted upon us a loss of four or five hundred cavalry in killed and wounded, and having themselves suffered a loss of eight pieces of cannon, seven or eight hundred killed, and a thousand prisoners.

Our advanced guard halted in front of Korytnia, the main army not having yet passed Krasnoé. Marshal Davoust had restored the Polish division Claparède, to the guard, Valence's cuirassiers to Nansouty, and had reserved the command of his three divisions of infantry, Morand, Friant, and Gudin, which were delighted to find themselves once more under their old leader. The Polish troops commanded by Poniatowski; and the Westphalians, whom Napoleon had entrusted to General Junot, were placed under the direct orders of head quarters, and posted at the head of the army, towards its extreme right, and Grouchy's cavalry accompanied the advanced guard of Murat and Ney, until Prince Eugene, who had the longest march to make, should have rejoined the main body.

On the 15th it was desired, even in these remote districts, to celebrate the fête of Napoleon, at least by some salvoes of artillery. All the Marshals, surrounded by their staffs, approached the Emperor to tender him their homage, and at the same moment were heard the reports of the cannon fired in his honour. Napoleon complained that gunpowder, at that moment so precious, should be wasted, and the Marshals replied that the powder used had been taken from the Russians at Krasnoé; he smiled at this answer, and willingly received the *vivas* of the troops, as a sign of their warlike ardour. Alas! neither he nor his troops then suspected to what terrible disasters they were to be exposed three months later on the ground they now occupied.

On the following day, the 16th of August, the advanced guard was ordered to march upon Smolensk, which, it was hoped on our side, might be surprised, for Névéroffskoi's division, of which a third had been taken or destroyed, being the only troops yet encountered, it was supposed that this city would be but slightly guarded, and consequently fall into our hands within the space of a few hours. Upon arriving, however, on the hills which overlook Smolensk, it was discovered that the hope of surprising it was a vain one, since a numerous body of troops posted on the other side of the Dnieper, on which river this city stood, were then seen



entering within its walls. These troops were those of the 7th, Raëffskoi's corps, which Bagration, on perceiving our movement, had directed thither in all haste, whilst he himself, advancing by forced marches along the right bank of the Dnieper, hastened to the succour of the ancient city of Smolensk, situated on the frontiers of Moscovy, and dear to the Russians, who had disputed its possession with the Poles for many ages.

Ney had scarcely approached a ravine which separated him from the town, when he was attacked by an ambuscade of several hundred Cossacks, received a ball in the collar of his coat, and was only with much difficulty disengaged by the light cavalry of the 3rd corps. Having perceived on his left, that a portion of the enciente of Smolensk was closed by a pentagonal citadel of earth, he attempted to take it with the 46th of the line; but this regiment being received by a furious fire, was compelled to withdraw from the attack, with the loss of three or four hundred men; and upon this Ney, who was ignorant on what point the city was susceptible of attack on this side, and who was unwilling to expose himself to the risk of any serious reverse in the absence of Napoleon, determined to await his arrival. Gradually the remainder of the 3rd corps arrived, and posted itself in line on the heights above the city. Ney took up a position on the left, and near the Dnieper with his infantry, whilst Grouchy's cavalry debouched on the right, and advanced towards a large body of Russian cavalry, which having shown a disposition to attack our troops, was charged at full gallop by our 7th of dragoons, and driven back upon the town.

Towards the middle of the day, Napoleon himself came up, and Ney communicated to him the result of his observations on the defences of the city before them.

Smolensk, as we have already said, is on the Dnieper at the foot of two ranges of hills, which contract its current. The old town, which is much the more important portion, is on the left bank, the one by which our troops had reached it, and the new town, called the faubourg of St. Petersburg, is situated on the right bank—the side on which were posted the Russian troops. A bridge unites these two portions of the city. The old town is surrounded by a brick wall about fifteen feet in thickness, twenty-five in height, and flanked at intervals with great towers. A fosse, with a road couvert and glacis, preceded and protected this wall, but the whole was very badly traced, and executed long before the rise of the modern system of fortification. In front of, and around the old town, were large faubourgs; one named Krasnoé, on the Krasnoé route, touching on the Dnieper; another in the centre, named Micislaw, from the Micislaw road which

runs into it; another still more to the centre, named Roslawl from a similar reason; a fourth, to the right, called the Nikolskoie; a fifth and last, named the Raczenska, forming the extremity of the semi-circle, and abutting on the Dnieper. From the heights on which the army had taken up its position the old town could be beheld, its enciente flanked with towers, its streets winding, and inclined towards the river, its noble and antique Byzantine cathedral, the bridge connecting the two banks of the Dnieper, and the new town dotting the sides of the opposite range of hills, whilst numerous bodies of Russian soldiers could be seen hastening up by the right bank of the river to defend a city which was almost as dear to them as Moscow. Napoleon, therefore, could no longer hope to surprise Smolensk, and he consoled himself by the hope that the whole Russian army would debouch for the purpose of giving him battle; for a great victory gained under the walls of this city, followed by the consequences which he well knew how to extract from all his victories, would be sufficiently in accordance with his plans.

In fact, Prince Bagration, who was ascending in all haste the right bank of the Dnieper by a movement parallel to that of our troops, and Barclay de Tolly, who was approaching by a transverse route which led from the Dwina to the Dnieper, began to appear on the heights opposite to those which we occupied; for each of these Generals having become acquainted with Napoleon's designs, was advancing with the utmost eagerness to the defence of the ancient Russian city, and resolved—although to give battle to the French in such a position was the height of imprudence—not to endure the shame of yielding it without a struggle. The adoption of this resolution was hastily agreed on throughout the Russian army, and the task of executing the various measures which had to be performed, adopted without discussion. And of these tasks there were two of pre-eminent importance, the first and most apparent of which consisted in the defence of Smolensk; but as it was possible that whilst defending Smolensk, Napoleon—his attack on that city being only a feigned one—might pass the Dnieper at some point above it and turn the Russian army, thus exposing it to that serious disaster to which it had been unconsciously exposed since the commencement of the campaign; it was agreed that Prince Bagration should take up a position with the second army above Smolensk on the banks of the Dnieper, to watch the fords, whilst Barclay de Tolly defended the city itself. Prince Bagration accordingly, immediately proceeded to take up a position with forty thousand men behind the little river, Kolodnia, a tributary of

the Dnieper; and General Raëffskoi, who had guarded Smolensk with the 4th corps, during the 15th, and the morning of the 16th, now withdrew, resigning it to the troops of Barclay de Tolly, who confided its defence to the 6th corps under General Doctoroff, together with the division Konownitsyn, and the *débris* of the division Névéroffskoi, which was the division which had fought at Krasnoé, and posted the remainder of his army on the other side of the Dnieper, in the new town, and on the hills above it. And thus—the French, to the number of one hundred and forty thousand men, occupying the heights of the left bank of the Dnieper, and the Russians to the number of one hundred and twenty-nine thousand, occupying those of the right bank,—was presented by each army to the other the most interesting and extraordinary spectacle.

The Russians having at length halted, it was impossible for Napoleon to retreat, or to allow them the advantage of having disputed with them the possession of such a place as Smolensk. He might, doubtless, have ascended the Dnieper, have been able most probably to ford it above Smolensk, and to have executed, a little higher, his grand manœuvre. But, on the one hand, he had not time to reconnoitre the stream and to render himself certain that it would be easy to effect its passage; and on the other, he could not but hesitate to attempt such an operation in the presence of the enemy, the more especially as he would thus leave in the hands of the Russians, the bridge of Smolensk, by which they would be able to debouch at any instant, and cut off his line of communication. To seize Smolensk by means of the most vigorous measures was, therefore, the only mode of proceeding suited to his position, or agreeable to his character, and the only one capable of preserving to him that reputation for success in warfare which was now, more than ever, necessary to his welfare.

Napoleon lost no time in placing his troops in line. On the left against the Dnieper, opposite the faubourg of Krasnoé, he posted the three divisions of Marshal Ney; in the centre, opposite the Micislaw and the Roslawl faubourgs, the five divisions of Davoust; on the right, in front of the Nicolskoié and Raczenska faubourgs, the Polish troops under Poniatowski; and finally, on the extreme right, on a plateau bordering the Dnieper, the mass of the French cavalry. In the rear, and at the centre of the vast semi-circle, he posted the Imperial Guard; and on the heights, in positions from which it could overwhelm with a plunging fire the unhappy city, he made the best possible disposition of his artillery.



Prince Eugene's corps was still three or four leagues in the rear at Korytnia, and Junot, who had been directed to advance with the Westphalians to support the Poles, had fallen into error with respect to the route; but the presence of these two detachments, which numbered together forty thousand men, was not necessary to enable the French army to overwhelm the enemy before it. The whole of the latter part of the 16th of August was thus employed, therefore, both by French and Russians, in taking up their relative positions, and passed without the occurrence of any serious encounter between them—with the exception that the French artillery directed an incessant fire against the city, in which it committed great ravages, and slew many of the troops with which it was overcrowded.

On the morning of the following day, the 17th, Napoleon, mounting his horse at an early hour, proceeded—accompanied by his lieutenants—to traverse the semi-circle of heights on which he was encamped, and distinctly saw the thirty thousand men of the divisions of Doctoroff, Konownitsyn, and Névéroffskoi, taking up their positions in the city and the faubourgs, whilst the remainder of the two Russian armies remained immovable on their heights. Amongst the events which Napoleon had considered to be possible, but very improbable was, that the Russians, in possession of Smolensk, and able at will to pass and repass the Dnieper under the shelter of strong walls, should go forth to offer him battle for the purpose of saving a city which they so highly valued. There was, in fact, beside Smolensk, on our right, a plateau in an excellent position and surrounded by a ravine, on which Napoleon planned to deploy his cavalry, but as he considered it was quite possible that this very position might tempt the Russians to occupy it, and as nothing would have been more in accordance with his plans than the commission of such a fault by them, he had taken care to leave it unoccupied and to withhold his cavalry in the rear in the hope of thus enticing them to advance. But to advance beyond the Dnieper, to give battle to the French in such a manner that, if beaten, they would have that river behind them, would have been so great an error that it could scarcely be hoped they would commit it; and they were, moreover, not so anxious to encounter our troops in battle as they were to die in defence of Smolensk.

Napoleon, however, allowed ten or twelve hours to elapse before taking any decided measures, as he was anxious to leave open to the last the opportunity for a general action; and in the meantime, many reflections were made in his hearing respecting the difficulty of taking Smolensk by



assault, whilst defended by thirty thousand Russians. To these remarks he made no reply, but brooded over the idea which had occurred to him of the possibility of crossing the Dnieper above Smolensk, and debouching unexpectedly on the left of the Russians, by which he would secure the complete execution of his grand manœuvre. To attempt, however, such an operation as this without imprudence, it was absolutely necessary that it should be conducted with the utmost celerity, and that the river should be fordable, since, if it should be necessary to throw bridges across it in the presence of the enemy, the Russians would infallibly oppose insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of such bridges, or would debouch by Smolensk on our flank and our rear, to cut off our line of communications, or would again retreat and escape us, leaving us certainly in the possession of Smolensk, but still depriving us of the opportunity of meeting them in battle. The whole success of such a manœuvre as the one alluded to, depended, in fact, on the answer to the question whether the river were fordable at any point near the position occupied by the French troops? For to proceed any considerable distance up the stream, and leave the enemy at liberty to debouch from Smolensk on our rear, would have been in the highest degree imprudent. Carefully taking all these considerations into account, Napoleon sent a detachment of cavalry to the bank of the river, for the purpose of seeking for a ford; but although the river appeared to be far from deep at this portion of its course, either because the reconnoissance was badly executed, or because it was not carried sufficiently high, no practicable ford was discovered; and the only measure that remained open, therefore, was to obtain possession of Smolensk by a vigorous assault. And on this measure, in spite of all objections, Napoleon resolved; for to hesitate in the presence of the enemy after having come so far to meet them, and to be timid of expending troops in actual conflict after having been so lavish of their lives on the march, would have been as unworthy of his genius as unsuited to the existing state of affairs. Between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon, therefore, he gave the signal for the commencement of the attack, and each portion of the troops advanced against the enemy in an order relative to the positions which they respectively occupied. On the right, the cavalry was thrown upon the plateau which had been left vacant, and which extended to the Dnieper; and the squadrons of General Bruyère driving back a brigade of Russian dragoons, protected the establishment of a battery of sixty pieces of cannon, which Napoleon had ordered to be formed on the very bank of the river, to

bombard the town, to enfilade the bridge connecting its two portions, and to command, also, the opposite bank on which the Russians were drawn up in order of battle. When this battery opened fire, the artillery of the enemy attempted to reply, but was speedily reduced to silence.

During the execution of these preliminary operations on our extreme right, Prince Poniatowski advancing with his infantry between the right and the centre, boldly attacked the faubourgs of Raczenska and Nikolskoié, which were defended by the division Névéroffskoi, and succeeded with his brave troops in pushing on throughout their whole extent. In the centre Marshal Davoust drove in the Russian advanced posts, in the faubourgs of Roslawl and Micislaw, and commenced a violent fire of artillery against the faubourgs and the town, which were in this quarter defended by the divisions Konownitsyn and Kaptsewitch. On the left, Ney, advancing with two divisions, and leaving a third in reserve, entered the Krasnoé faubourg, occupied by the division Likhaczeff, which he drove back even to the fosses of the city.

The principal attack was to be executed by Marshal Davoust, against the Micislaw and Roslawl faubourgs; and his first operation was to seize, with the division Morand, a great road which separated these two faubourgs and, descending to the town, ran on to the Malakofskia gate; his purpose being to isolate these two faubourgs from each other, and thus to facilitate the attack which he was about to direct against them in front. The 13th léger, led by General Dalton, and supported by the 30th of the line, crossed bayonets with the Russian troops which were in advance of the road, and drove them back with irresistible vigour even to the walls of the city. At the same moment, and a little to the left, the division Gudin, conducted by its General and Marshal Davoust in person, made an equally vigorous attack on the Micislaw faubourg, and driving back the division Kaptsewitch by which it was defended, entered it, driving the enemy from street to street, and thus reaching the edge of the fosse at the very moment when the division Morand arrived there by its side by the great road. On the right the division Friant had with less difficulty obtained possession of the Roslawl faubourg, and had arrived, as had the other three divisions, in front of the enceinte, when the whole three divisions might have been destroyed, had the old walls been provided with embrasures for artillery. Some shot and bullets did indeed reach their ranks from the towers; but the loss on the side of the Russians was far the greatest, for, driven at the bayonet's point into the fosses of the town, and

then exposed to a point-blank fire, their only means of entrance into Smolensk was by a few openings in the walls.

In spite of the successes thus obtained by our troops, the Russians, whom Barclay de Tolly had reinforced with the division of Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, attempted to resume the offensive, and to execute desperate sorties by the Nikolskoié and Malakofskia gates, which Prince Poniatowski and Marshal Davoust, who occupied positions in front of these gates, had some difficulty in repelling.

When these sorties had been effectually repulsed, all the available artillery was directed against the enceinte of the town, but the balls burying themselves in the old brick walls, produced comparatively but little damage, they were thrown over the walls into the midst of the city, and being fired as they were from many hundreds of pieces of cannon, committed great ravages amongst the buildings, and strewed the streets and public places with hundreds of dead.

After six hours of fierce conflict, the enceinte, which we could not force, and which the Russians would not cross, remained between and separated the combatants. And Marshal Davoust, whom Napoleon had directed to take the city at any cost, made preparations for executing this command on the following morning, after he should have overwhelmed the town with projectiles during the night.

In accordance with information received from General Haxo, who had reconnoitred the town under a terrible fire, Marshal Davoust resolved to direct the assault upon an apparently accessible point, situated towards our right, between the position of the 1st corps, and that of Prince Poniatowski. There was an old breach at this point, called the Sigismonda breach, which had never been repaired, and was now only closed by an epaulement in earth, and General Haxo having declared the position susceptible to attack, Marshal Davoust granted to General Friant the honour of conducting his division to the assault on the following morning.

A terrible spectacle filled the night. The Russians determining, at length, to sacrifice the city so dear to their hearts, and in defence of which they had expended so much blood, now united their efforts with ours in its destruction, and purposely filled it with those conflagrations which we involuntarily caused by our cannonade. Through the midst of the darkness suddenly poured forth torrents of flame and smoke, presenting to the eyes of the army encamped on the heights, a spectacle which deeply affected them, and which much resembled an eruption of Vesuvius, in a fine night of



summer. It was a spectacle which prefigured the fury which should signalise the war of which it was one of the incidents, and whilst it failed to inspire fear, it could not but excite emotion. Our artillery added fresh flames to the fire, and rendered the city untenable by the enemy.

In truth the blood which they had shed in the defence of Smolensk had satisfied the sentiments of honour, duty, and piety, which had inspired its defenders; and now Barclay de Tolly, who had sacrificed for a moment the dictates of his reason to sentiment, resumed the course pointed out by his calculations, and ordered Doctoroff, Névéroffskoi, and Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg to evacuate Smolensk; an order which they obeyed after having so thoroughly fired it, as to leave in our hands a mere calcined ruin. At daybreak our troops entered the city, disputing its possession with the flames, and endeavouring to save some portion of it from their ravages. Our loss in the attack had been six or seven thousand, and that of the Russians, according to the most exact calculations, twelve or thirteen thousand.

A great portion of the city, including the principal magazines, was found destroyed by the fire, and the loss, especially of colonial produce, was immense. The Russians had themselves been the chief authors of this damage; but the merit of the sacrifice thus made, was much diminished by the fact, that the troops and their leaders had destroyed property belonging to the poor merchants, and had thus satisfied their fury at the expense of others. The inhabitants had for the most part fled, and those whom want of time or means to fly had retained in the city, were assembled in the principal church, an old, and in Russia renowned Byzantine Basilica. Crowded within its walls, women, old men and children, filled with terror, embraced its altars, bathed in tears. Fortunately our cannon had failed to injure the venerable edifice, and had spared us the chagrin of being the authors of useless profanation. The wretched group was comforted by assurances of safety, and conducted to such of the houses as had escaped destruction. The streets presented a hideous spectacle, covered as they were with dead and wounded Russians, and these latter the excellent doctor Larrey caused to be collected almost simultaneously with our own wounded, in accordance with the kind dictates of his heart, and in pursuance of his noble policy of tending the wounded of the enemy, that they might thus be induced to bestow a similar care upon ours. Unfortunately national fury, excited against us to the highest pitch, rendered his calculations vain.

Our army, in spite of the excitement which was the natural



result of the desperate conflict with the enemy, and victorious success, experienced a painful emotion on its entrance into Smolensk. In former times, in the course of our long career of victory, when our troops had entered conquered towns, the inhabitants, after a short period of terror usually became reassured by the gentle conduct of the French soldiers, and returned to their dwellings which remained undestroyed, and all the comforts of which they hastened to share with their conquerors. We met with no conflagrations in our conquests then, but those which we had involuntarily caused by our cannonade. But in this last campaign, on the other hand, especially since we had crossed the Muscovite frontier, solitude and flames had on every side surrounded our march ; and if a few of the inhabitants here and there awaited our approach, their countenances were filled with expressions of terror and hate. The Jews even, who had been so numerous in Poland, and whose greediness had rendered them so serviceable, were no longer to be found beyond the Polish frontier, and were no longer ready to press upon us their timely but disgusting hospitality. As they gazed upon those flames, this solitude, those corpses lying in the streets, the French soldiers began to understand that they were not engaged in a war similar to those in which they had had so much experience, and in the course of which their heroism and humanity had disarmed the rancour of the enemy. They perceived that the present struggle was a far more serious one than any of those in which they had been previously engaged ; but they still experienced transports of enthusiasm at the sight of Napoleon ; still believed that they were executing a marvellous expedition surpassing all those of antiquity.

Napoleon traversed the town and the faubourgs on horseback, and then took up a position in one of the towers which flanked the enceinte on the side of the Dnieper and from which could be seen all that was passing beyond the river. He saw that the Russians were still in possession of the new town, but preparing to evacuate it, and only anxious to defend it until the evacuation could be accomplished. To secure the passage of the Dnieper was, therefore, the task of the immediate moment, and in accordance with Napoleon's orders, General Eblé took immediate measures for throwing bridges across it ; employing for this purpose, his own pontonniers, and the troops of Marshal Ney.

In the meantime, although victorious, Napoleon experienced in the very midst of the fruit of his victory, the city which his soldiers had taken by assault, a feeling of sad foreboding ; for he had just failed in accomplishing the third of

the grand manœuvres which he had planned for this campaign. He had failed to overtake Bagration at Bobruisk, he had in vain attempted to outflank Barclay de Tolly between Polotsk and Witebsk, and now, after having executed a most bold and skilful movement for the purpose of turning the united armies of Bagration and Barclay, he had been stopped in his course by Smolensk, and although it had yielded to his arms, been forced by it to lose the 16th, 17th, and 18th of August. From this moment, the hope of debouching beyond the Dnieper in time to outflank the enemy's left, could no longer be reasonably indulged in, for it would be impossible to effect the passage of the river until the Russians had gained at least a day's march in advance, and had been able to precede us on the St. Petersburg or Moscow routes; and Napoleon retired, therefore, into the dwelling which had been reserved for him in Smolensk, avenging himself for his disappointment by furiously blaming the Russian Generals, for having, as he said, uselessly sacrificed twelve thousand men; and indeed, had not the Russian Generals had good reason for the course they had pursued, the adoption of it would have been unjustifiable, but the truth was, that in endeavouring to defend Smolensk against us, they had yielded to the pressure of irresistible public feeling, and by delaying us two days before this city, had, in fact, saved themselves from one of the most dangerous combinations ever formed by their terrible adversary.

Those severe judges who after his fall became as harsh towards Napoleon as Fortune herself, attributed the ill success of his combinations to his own errors, and the circumstances above narrated will have shown that such blame is more or less well founded. We have seen, in fact, that when planning to surround Prince Bagration, or at least to isolate him during the remainder of the campaign, Napoleon had not sufficiently taken into consideration the difficulties which the nature of the country and the distances to be traversed opposed to the junction of King Jerome with Marshal Davoust; that he had behaved, also, with too much roughness to his younger brother, and had placed too few troops at the disposal of the Marshal. To a certain extent, therefore, the failure of his first combination is attributable to himself. In the case of the project of defiling before the Drissa camp and suddenly crossing the Dwina, between Polotsk and Witebsk, for the purpose of outflanking Barclay de Tolly and taking him in reverse, Napoleon's plan had been successfully carried out, and he is here only open to blame on account of the fact, that by urging war against

them he had taught the art of war to his enemies, and had thus enabled them<sup>s</sup> to perceive the danger in which they had been placed by his combinations, and to escape from it whilst inflicting upon him the greatest possible amount of injury. Finally, with respect to his last project, it has been said that Napoleon should have paused before arriving at the Dnieper, have ascended this river by the right bank instead of the left, and turned the Russians by Nadwa. But it is well known that he calculated all the chances of this movement with Marshal Davoust, and that it was only after mature reflection that he resolved to march by the left bank, which was the one unoccupied by the Russians ; and, indeed, the state of affairs which we know to have been actually existing at the time, show that he was right in adopting this resolution, for had he adopted the contrary course he would have found Bagration in a state of desperation at Nadwa, would have most probably have drawn the Russians *en masse*, on their left, and incurred the risk of being drawn by them into the Dnieper. Again, it has been said, that instead of attempting to turn the Russians by their left, he should have made it his object to turn them by their right, namely by Witebsk and Sourage ; ascending the Dwina, descending upon the Russians by their right, and driving them upon the Dnieper. But a glance at the map will prove that Napoleon's calculations were better than those of his censors, for by throwing the Russians back upon the Dnieper he would have thrown them back upon the Smolensk bridge, which they would have been able to pass without difficulty, and from whence they might have readily regained the interior of the Empire by the southern provinces, which were the most fertile, and offered the vastest field for a continued retreat.

On the other hand, by turning them by the left, and throwing them back upon the Dwina, he drove them into an angle formed by the Dwina and the sea, and took a step towards completely surrounding them. And the cause of the failure of this project is not to be found in any error of his military genius, but in the energy displayed by the Russians at Smolensk, and if we blame him, we must blame his adoption of a policy which led him to brave unknown regions and men driven to despair ; both of which are calculated, in the very nature of things, to offer invincible opposition to any foreign attack.

Whilst Napoleon within the walls of Smolensk was devoting his attention to the necessities of his army, and his pontonniers were busily engaged, in spite of the vigorous fire of the enemy's tirailleurs, in throwing bridges across



the river, the Russian Generals were taking measures for securing their retreat ; and it was necessary that they should hasten it, since the Moscow route, proceeding for some leagues along the right bank of the Dnieper, might at once be barred against them, should the French be successful in any of their numerous attempts to discover a ford. But, on the other hand, if a resolution to comply with a popular inclination might be adopted without hesitation, a determination to act in a manner entirely opposed to it required some time for consideration, and it was not until the evening of the 18th, when our bridges were finished, that Barclay de Tolly, who by every retrograde step deeply wounded the national pride of his troops, resolved to resign the new town to the French. Having resolved upon this measure, he ordered Bagration to advance, to seize the most important points on the Moscow route, and made preparations to follow with the main army. The Moscow route runs directly east, after having crossed the opening of twenty leagues, already alluded to, which exists between the sources of the Dwina and the Dnieper, and thus twice encounters the sinuosities of the Dnieper, first at Salowiewo, which is a day's march from Smolensk, and secondly at Darogobouge, which is two days' march from the same place. At Salowiewo, it crosses from the right bank of the Dnieper, the one occupied by the Russians, to the left bank, which was that occupied by the French ; and thus was presented an opportunity to the latter of cutting off the retreating army. At Darogobouge the Moscow route encounters the Dnieper for the last time, and there, behind the Ouja, a little river falling into the Dnieper, was a position, the pre-occupation of which could not fail to be useful to the Russians. Barclay de Tolly ordered, therefore, Bagration to advance with the utmost expedition upon Darogobouge, and resolved to march himself to Salowiewo, setting out on the evening of the 18th, and marching all the night for the purpose of arriving there in time. But this retreat, which could be easily effected by Bagration, who was much in advance, was a matter of considerable difficulty for Barclay de Tolly, who was still at Smolensk, and who, in pursuing the Moscow road would have to pass for two leagues so close to the Dnieper, that he would be constantly exposed to an irruption of the French.

To avoid this danger, Barclay de Tolly conceived the idea of taking the cross roads, which would place him out of reach of attack, and conduct him back to the main road at a distance of three or four leagues further on near a place called Loubino ; and in pursuance of this plan, divided into two columns the troops which were under his own personal



command. The one, composed of the 5th and 6th corps, under General Doctoroff, the 2nd and 3rd cavalry corps, the whole of the artillery reserve, and the baggage, was to make the longest detour, and to proceed to Salowiewo by Zikolino. The second composed of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, corps and the 1st cavalry corps, under the command of Lieutenant General Touczkoff, was to make a less long detour and to proceed to Loubino by Krakhotkino and Gorbounowo. At the same time, as Barclay de Tolly, who had sent forward only four Cossack regiments under General Karpof, by the direct route, feared that there would not be a sufficient force for the occupation of the position Loubino by which the cross roads rejoined the main road, he despatched three more regiments of Cossacks, the Elisabethgrade hussars, the Revel regiment, the 20th and the 21st Chasseurs in the same direction. Having made these arrangements he set his whole army in motion during the night of the 18th, leaving before Smolensk a rear guard under General Korff.

Towards the close of the 18th of August the French had made great progress in the establishment of their bridges, and on the night of the same day began to pass across them to the other side of the Dnieper. On the following morning Ney and Davoust had effected the passage with their corps, and entering into action with the rear guard of General Korff, at once succeeded in driving it back. When our troops arrived on the heights on the left bank, two routes were open before them; the one running direct north, and leading, by Poreczié and the Dwina in the direction of St. Petersburg; and the other running eastward, following the course of the Dnieper, and leading by Solowiewo and Darogobouge in the direction of Moscow. On each of these routes a Russian rear-guard was visible, as would naturally be the case, since the bulk of Barclay de Tolly's army, about to pursue its march by the cross roads, would follow for the moment the St. Petersburg route, and General Karpof's detachment, on the contrary, being despatched by the shortest road to seize the débouché of Loubino, would simply follow the Moscow route. In a state of some uncertainty Ney hastened to attack the detachment of the enemy to which he was nearest, and which was the one on the St. Petersburg route, and coming up with it at a place called Gédéonowo succeeded in driving it back a considerable distance; whereupon, General Barclay de Tolly, terrified at the excessive propinquity of the French, and the possibility of their intercepting the cross roads along which he intended to march the two columns of his troops, immediately hastened up, and ordered Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg to defend this point at any cost, in order to afford time to the

troops yet in the rear to defile ; and, accordingly, the Russians regarding the defence of the contested position as necessary to their safety, defended it with an energy far exceeding that with which the French attacked it, and the Russians remained, therefore, in the possession of Gédéonowo.

In the meantime, Napoleon, who had been watching the movements of the enemy both towards the north and the east, concluded that they were conducting their retreat in the direction of Moscow, and withdrew, therefore, Marshal Ney from the St. Petersburg route, on which he was furiously attacking the enemy, and sent him to the Moscow road, assuring him that if he were sufficiently quick in his movements, he would obtain some brilliant triumph before the end of the day. He despatched, also, in the same direction, a portion of the troops of Marshal Davoust, that they might support those of Ney, if there should be need, but left the remainder on the St. Petersburg route, that he might have the means of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs in each direction, and then re-entered Smolensk, where a thousand cares demanded his attention, to await the result of the reconnaissances which his lieutenants were about to execute.

Marshal Ney followed with his three divisions the Russian divisions charged with the task of occupying the Loubino position, and drove them from two plateaux on which they successively attempted to resist our troops, to a last post which they determined to defend at any cost. Beyond this position, in fact, was the débouché of Loubino, and they could not make any further retrograde movement without allowing this débouché by which Barclay de Tolly's second column was to regain the main road, to fall into the hands of the French. The nature of the ground was favourable to the Russians, who had taken up a position behind a muddy streamlet, and flanked by a range of elevations covered with clumps of trees and thick brushwood. Barclay de Tolly had brought up to this spot the head of the second column, consisting of eight pieces of artillery, many regiments of grenadiers and some cavalry, and posting the chasseurs on the brink of the streamlet, and in the brushwood, the grenadiers on the right and left of the opening made by the passage of the road through the range of elevations, and a strong detachment across it, sent officers to demand the assistance of all the troops which might be sufficiently near to afford it.

Marshal Ney arrived in the course of the afternoon before this third position, and resolved to take it. But to effect this object was a matter of considerable difficulty, since it would

be necessary to force the road which descended somewhat to the right into a species of marsh, then crossed the streamlet by a bridge now destroyed by the Russians, and finally rose through the midst of thickets filled with the enemy's tirailleurs, across the range of elevations on which were posted both troops and artillery. As considerable reinforcements, therefore, were necessary to enable him to effect his object, he drove in the Russian advanced posts beyond the streamlet, hastened to re-establish the little bridge, and sent a demand to Napoleon for more troops.

During the progress of these events, Murat had executed reconnaissances in various directions, and now arrived with some cavalry regiments on the Moscow route and was ready to join Ney. Junot, who had been directed in consequence of his position during the preceding days, to pass the Dnieper above Smolensk, had crossed it at Prouditchewo, and now found himself on the flank of the enemy. Of the five divisions of Marshal Davoust, two were on their march upon the Moscow route, and one—that of General Gudin—arriving at about five o'clock in the afternoon at the little bridge which was being re-established across the streamlet, immediately prepared to attack the Russian position. But during the interval which had occurred before the arrival of reinforcements the Russians had received important additional strength, almost the whole of Barclay de Tolly's second column having come up, with the exception of Bagowouth's corps, which had been delayed by the combat of Gédéonowo. The 3rd and 4th corps, those of Touczkoff and Ostermann, had been immediately carried into line, and posted in the rear, on the right and left of the road, as soon as it reached Loubino; whilst the cavalry was posted far upon the left, opposite Prouditchewo, the point at which Junot had passed the Dnieper. And thus the position had become a most difficult one to carry, since it was defended by about forty thousand men and a formidable artillery.

Ney had, in fact, at his actual disposal only the two divisions of infantry, Razout and Ledru, reduced to twelve thousand men by the recent engagements, and the division Gudin which, after the capture of Smolensk numbered no more than eight thousand bayonets. Murat's three thousand cavalry were far to the right, endeavouring to traverse the marshes extending along the Dnieper, for the purpose of debouching on the left of the Russians, and Junot's ten thousand Wesphalians were so extended amidst the marshes that it was very doubtful whether they could be brought up to take part in the principal action.

These difficulties, however, did not check the exertions of



Ney or Gudin ; and the latter prepared to seize with his division at any price the species of coupe gorge which extended beyond the little bridge. To effect this, it was necessary to plunge into the marsh, to cross the bridge under the fire of the tirailleurs who filled the brushwood, to ascend the road across a gorge crowned with artillery on either side, and finally to debouch on a plateau upon which the Russian troops were drawn up in dense masses. General Gudin formed his division into columns for the attack, whilst Marshal Ney prepared to support him with the division Ledru ; the division Razout proceeding to engage the enemy's attention on the left, and Murat advancing with his cavalry to seek a passage across the marshes.

As soon as the signal had been given Gudin's columns of infantry defiled across the bridge, uttering cries of *Vive l'Empereur*, and unchecked by the fire of the enemy's tirailleurs and artillery to which they were exposed, succeeded in reaching the opposite bank. Ascending the elevated ground they encountered a troop of grenadiers whom they repulsed at the point of the bayonet, and then succeeded in debouching on the plateau. Fresh battalions of the enemy, however, advanced against them, and compelled them to fall back. The brave Gudin led them again to the charge, and a terrible *mêlée* took place between the stream and the foot of the rising ground, in the midst of which Gudin was struck by a ball which broke his thigh, and falling into the arms of his officers he transferred his command to General Gérard. Once more our troops threw themselves on the enemy, and ascending the elevated ground a second time appeared on the plateau. Ney supported them with the division Ledru, and they seemed to be masters of the position ; until fresh Russian troops were seen advancing upon it and gave rise to fears that it would once more be torn from our hands

In the meantime Murat, who had hastened towards the right for the purpose of endeavouring to outflank the position, found Junot beyond the Dnieper awaiting orders, which did not reach him, and in default of which he committed the error of not making the necessary movements. Murat urged him to attack in reverse the long elevated position which Ney and Gérard were attacking in front, but unfortunately the effects of the excessive heat and the wound which he had received in his head in Portugal had deprived Junot of his usual energy, and in spite of the exhortations of Murat, whose cavalry could not supply, on such ground, the place of infantry, made but feeble and dilatory attempts to cross the marshes which separated him from the enemy,



endeavouring to form a passage by throwing fascines into the mud.

At its principal point, however, this desperate struggle was coming to an end. Barclay de Tolly desiring to make one last effort had directed the brave Konowitsyn division against the divisions Gudin and Ledru, for the purpose of driving them from the plateau which they occupied, and the latter, yielding for a moment before the violence of the enemy's attack, had returned to the charge, and throwing themselves upon the Russian infantry with the utmost fury, had succeeded in completely routing them. At ten o'clock in the evening three divisions remained masters of the débouché. The division Ragout joined them, and Murat having passed all obstacles, in his turn deployed upon the plateau, and completely cleared it of the Russian troops.

This terrible combat, which has been called the battle of Valoutina, and is one of the most bloody of the age, cost the Russians six or seven thousand men, and the French as many; and we must go back to Hallobrunn, Eylau, Ebersberg, and Essling, to find its parallel. Unfortunately its result, since it was no longer possible to prevent the Russians from effecting the passage of the Dnieper at Solowiewo, could be of no other advantage to us than to prove the superiority of our arms.

When Napoleon was informed of the details of this action, he was surprised at its serious character, and deeply affected at having missed so excellent an opportunity of seizing an entire column of the Russian army, which would have given to the capture of Smolensk the importance of a great victory, and relieved him of the necessity of seeking any further triumph. At the sight of the field of battle, which he visited at three o'clock on the morning of the following day, the 20th, he was astonished at the energy with which his troops must have fought, and of which the number and positions of the corpses, as well as the nature of the ground, afforded means of judging. As he ascended to the plateau and carried his observations towards the right, he was excessively irritated against Junot, whose dilatoriness had contributed to save the Russians, and as those about him failed to inform him that the road which he had to traverse, was a very marshy and difficult one, and as he failed to remind himself that he had left Junot without orders, he resolved, in the first moments of his anger, to supersede him in the command of the Westphalians by General Rapp. Returning to the midst of the blood-stained bivouacs of the division Gudin, he had the troops formed into a circle, and distributed amongst them rewards for their courage, at the same time expressing

the deepest regret for the brave General Gudín who was dying. This illustrious General, indeed, who had for many years shared with Generals Morand and Friant, the glory acquired by Marshal Davoust, was, for his heroic courage, his goodness of heart, and his cultivated mind, an object of esteem with the officers, and of affection with the troops; and his death was regarded throughout the whole army as a common loss.

On his returning from Smolensk, Napoleon could not refrain from indulging in the most gloomy reflections, for throughout this campaign, which he regarded as the most important he had ever entered upon, which he intended, should it be successful, to be the last, and for which he had made such vast preparations, his genius had never in a single instance been seconded by fortune. Bagration separated from Barclay de Tolly by his skilful combination had finally succeeded in effecting a junction with him; and in spite of his well-formed plans, to out-flank and turn the latter, these two generals had now regained the Moscow route. In every encounter, indeed, his arms had been victorious over those of the enemy; and he had obtained triumphs at Deweltowo, Mohilew, Ostrowno, Polotsk, Inkowo, Krasnoé, Smolensk and Valoutina. The loss suffered by the enemy's troops in these encounters was threefold that suffered by his own forces; and moreover, without fighting any great battle, he had effected movements which secured the conquest of the whole of ancient Poland with the single exception of Volhynia. Nevertheless, accustomed as he had been to strike blows in warfare, of such a nature as could not fail to appeal forcibly to the imaginations of mankind, he appeared to have been unsuccessful in supporting during this campaign the prestige of his power. Napoleon was more conscious of this than he was willing to allow, and he felt it bitterly. At the same time he did not fail to perceive, that although he had forced the Russians to retreat, and left them no alternative, they had themselves formed a plan to retreat before him, and thus carry the war into the interior of Russia. Nevertheless, when any of his staff, to whom these tactics of the enemy were equally manifest, ventured to press them on his attention, he persisted in denying their existence, as men frequently deny the existence of a danger which they fear, and unhesitatingly affirmed that the Russians retreated because they were beaten and driven back, and that the movements which were affirmed to be the result of their tactics were in reality the simple effect of their inability to resist the pressure of the French arms.

But his real opinions were not altogether, or were but very

slightly in accordance with these declarations, and perceiving, as he did, the manner in which the ranks of his army had become thinned, even since the arrival at Witebsk, rather by the effects of the march than the enemy's force, he became awake to the danger which would be incurred by carrying the war any further into the interior of the enemy's country. At the same time he asked himself, as he had already asked himself at Witebsk, what would be the reflections and what the actions of the Prussians, Austrians, Germans, Dutch, and Italians, should they behold him halting before obstacles to which they would attribute whatever character they chose, which they would declare to be invincible, and which they would not fail to assert would be as invincible during the next year as they were this. Would there not be herein, he asked himself, a source of extreme danger to an empire composed, as was his, of elements so discordant and so rebellious? Moreover, would it be so easy to establish, to defend, and provision that line of cantonments which he was so constantly urged to form from Bobruisk to Riga, over a line three hundred leagues in extent, on the Dwina and the Dnieper? Would these rivers, filled up with snow as they would be from the last days of October to the beginning of April, be a sufficient frontier? How would his troops, who were now for the first time, infected with the contagious malady of desertion, endure in a state of inactivity eight months of painful and wearisome winter? Who would be able, under such circumstances, if he himself did not remain among them, to maintain discipline and to preserve confidence amidst their ranks? And if he should remain amidst these cantonments, how would it be possible for him to govern from the midst of so difficult a position the course of affairs at Rome and Cadiz?

These were serious considerations, which are too little taken into account by those persons who blame Napoleon for not having terminated this first campaign at Smolensk, and which prove that the dangers attending this war were inherent in its very nature, rather than the effect of one or another method of conducting it. They caused Napoleon deep and painful reflections, and were the result of circumstances which demanded the adoption of some immediate plan of action. Nevertheless, although it was necessary to take some decided course without delay, there was little doubt that certain circumstances, which would be speedily apparent must to a great degree determine what this course must be; namely, the attitude which the enemy should adopt beyond Smolensk, the disposition he should manifest either to encounter our troops or to retreat before them, and the



situation of the Generals left on the wings of the main army, of Marshal Oudinot at Polotsk, of Prince Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, at Brezesc. Should the enemy display an inclination to give us battle, it would be necessary to encounter them at once. Should Marshal Oudinot, the Prince of Schwarzenberg, and General Reynier, have been vanquished, it would be necessary to proceed to their aid; should they have been victorious, the main army would be more free to advance.

As the lapse of three or four days would suffice to afford him certain information on these points, Napoleon resolved to halt for that time at Smolensk, taking in the meantime those preliminary measures which would be necessary, should he eventually resolve to advance farther into the country. Accordingly, he ordered Murat and Marshal Davoust, the two most dissimilar men in the whole army, and acting as useful checks the one on the other, to follow the enemy with two corps of cavalry and five divisions of infantry respectively, and to discover as accurately as possible, the plans of the Russian Generals. As Marshal Ney's troops, which had formed the advanced guard since the departure from Witebsk, had need of repose, and the Marshal himself was too energetic for the conduct of the intended operations, Napoleon ordered him, after his divisions should have rested one or two days, to follow Murat and Davoust, but at some distance; and at the same time sent Prince Eugene a little to the left of the main army in the direction of Doukhowtchina, for the purpose of sweeping the country between the Dnieper and the Dwina, and learning what might be on this side the intended movements of the enemy.

The information, in fact, which arrived every moment from both right and left, from both Brezesc and Polotsk, was of a very satisfactory character, and was generally to the following effect:—General Reynier had fallen back upon Slonim for the purpose of meeting Prince Schwarzenberg, who had been ordered, as we have already seen, to retrace his steps towards the Bug, and to effect a junction with the Saxons for the purpose of driving General Tormazoff into Volhynia. The intended junction between the Saxons and Austrians had been effected on the 3rd of August, and the united troops had moved upon Pronjany and Kobrin, where had occurred the unfortunate incident of the surprise of the Saxon detachment by the Russian General, Tormazoff. As General Reynier's troops were reduced to eleven thousand, and Prince Schwarzenberg's to twenty-five thousand, their allied forces numbered no more than thirty-six thou-



sand men ; but as those of General Tormazoff, who had been obliged to leave troops at Mozyr to guard his rear, numbered scarcely so many, the latter had not failed to retreat before the French, and hastened to return towards Kobrin and Pinsk, for the purpose of covering the Bug, the Pripet, and the celebrated marshes of that part of the country.

Pursuing the retreating enemy with considerable activity, the Austrians and Saxons arrived on the 11th of August, at a place named Gorodeczna, at some leagues distance from Kobrin, and found the Russians established there in a strong position which they were evidently determined to defend. At Gorodeczna, the Kobrin road ascended somewhat elevated ground, at the foot of which ran a stream, of which the banks were somewhat marshy, and to effect the passage of which would necessarily be a matter of difficulty ; and it was on this elevated ground that General Tormazoff was now posted with thirty-six thousand infantry and sixty pieces of cannon. Perceiving the difficulty of carrying such a position by an attack in front, Schwarzenberg and Reynier sought on their right for some passage, which would enable them to outflank the enemy's right, and at a village named Podoubié, found a position which afforded the opportunity of outflanking the Russian left, but the passage would have to be effected not only across a marsh-bordered stream, but at a point over which the enemy kept a careful watch. A little beyond this place, however, on the declivity of the elevated ground which it was intended to seize, was a wood which was unoccupied by the enemy, and through which ran a road which joined a league further the main Kobrin road.

General Reynier, who was a skilful officer and able tactician, had speedily discovered the enemy's error, and proposed to take advantage of it by penetrating below Podoubié—the wood which the Russians had neglected to occupy—and thus turning their position. Prince Schwarzenberg at once assented to the plan and gave Reynier an Austrian division, as well as a large portion of his cavalry, that he might have ample means for the execution of the proposed manœuvre. It was agreed, also, that on the morning of the following day, the 12th of August, the Prince should make a serious attack on Gorodeczna in front with the bulk of his forces, for the purpose of occupying the attention of the Russians on this side, whilst Reynier should make a vigorous effort to turn them on their left.

Everything having been thus arranged, Reynier penetrated during the night into the wood in question, established

himself within it, and as soon as it was day, suddenly debouched into a little plain into which merged the elevated ground occupied by the enemy, who having soon perceived the movement made by the Saxons, had left a portion of his troops at Garodeczna to resist the attack of Prince Schwarzenberg in front, and had thrown the remainder on their left flank, for the purpose of meeting the troops of General Reynier. And on this double line did the opposed troops contend during the whole of the 12th.

Although both Austrians and Saxons fought in their respective positions with the utmost valour, the conflict of the day would have had no result, had not Prince Schwarzenberg directed an attack against the intermediate point at Podoubié, which was nearer the Russian left flank. At this spot, however, Colloredo's Austrian regiment, together with the Saxon chasseurs, plunging through the marsh, climbed the rising ground at the very moment when the conflict between Reynier's troops and the enemy was at its height. Their appearance filled the latter with dismay, and General Reynier seizing the opportunity to attack them still more vigorously, succeeded in gaining ground on their left, and at the same time threw the whole of his cavalry on his extreme right on the enemy's rear; by this means threatening the great Kobrin road. As soon as the Russians perceived this movement they met our cavalry with their own, but after some fighting considered that it would be imprudent to attempt any longer to defend a position so difficult to maintain, and retreated under cover of the night, having lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners, about four thousand men; a loss more than double that suffered by their opponents.

Had proper advantage been taken of the results of this day's conflict, it might have enabled our troops to drive the Russians into Volhynia, to have even pursued them thither, and at least to have prevented them from returning, if their force had not been doubled by the arrival of the troops from Turkey. Its immediate effect would be to appease the terrors of the Poles, and to cover our right flank; and the news of it was so gratifying to Napoleon that he sent a gift of five hundred thousand francs (the second of that amount) to the Austrian army, together with a large number of decorations, and wrote to Vienna to request that the bâton of Marshal might be bestowed upon Schwarzenberg. At the same time it was impossible that he should not perceive that this portion of his forces had been reduced by the late battle to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men, and he besought his father-in-law to increase it by three thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry which, with reinforcements which he had demanded

at Warsaw, would raise the number of Prince Schwarzenberg's army to forty-five thousand men, and be sufficient, he considered, to free Volhynia from the Russian yoke.

This event necessarily diverted Napoleon from the intention which he had entertained of summoning Prince Schwarzenberg to the main army; for to have caused Prince Schwarzenberg to have traversed one hundred and twenty leagues for the purpose of arriving at Smolensk, and Prince Poniatowski to have accomplished as long a march from Smolensk to Kobrin, would have been to paralyse these two corps for more than a month at the most critical moment of the campaign, and to have deprived them, moreover, of a fourth or fifth of their effective strength by the fatigues of the march. And although he could not flatter himself, that the Austrians would be very active propagators of the Polish insurrection in Volhynia, their conduct during the campaign enabled him with some degree of confidence to confide to their honour the defence of the French right and rear.

In the meantime, the course of events had been no less favourable on our left, on the side of the Dwina. Marshal Oudinot had, as we have seen, after the checks inflicted by him on the Count Wittgenstein on the 24th of July and the 1st of August, retreated upon Polotsk, for the purpose of affording his troops some repose, a position which they might readily defend, and the advantage of being able to gather forage under the protection of the Dwina. Napoleon, however, fearing some unfavourable moral effect from these retrograde movements, and indulging in exaggerated ideas of the resources possessed by his lieutenants, had addressed reproaches to Marshal Oudinot, declaring that by retreating after a victory, he had placed himself in the position of one who had been vanquished; which was doubtless to some extent the truth, but it was no less true that Marshal Oudinot's troops were worn out, reduced from thirty-eight thousand men to twenty thousand by the fatigues of the march, the heat, and desertion, and that they were in absolute need of some repose. Moreover, the Bavarians, whom Napoleon had sent to reinforce Marshal Oudinot, were no less in need of an opportunity to recover from the effects of the heat, fatigue, and dysentery, which had reduced them to thirteen thousand men, and rendered them totally unfit for active operations in the field.

However, after some days of repose, Marshal Oudinot, who was constantly being urged on to active operations by Napoleon, considered that he ought to resume the offensive against Wittgenstein, and moved to the left from Polotsk upon the Drissa, towards Valcintsoui, some leagues below



the Sivotschina, where he had inflicted so severe a blow on the Russians some time previously. Failing to find them behind the Drissa, he had crossed this river and moved upon Svoiana, behind which were encamped the troops of Count Wittgenstein, which had been increased by reinforcements to a number equal to that of the French, who now amounted, with the Bavarians, to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men. But it is necessary to add that the Russian troops were in a much better state than ours, although inferior as soldiers, and were entirely Russian, whilst of Marshal Oudinot's corps scarcely half were French.

Conscious that his corps, which numerically amounted to thirty-two or thirty-three thousand men, had no more than twenty-five thousand really effective troops, and placing but little reliance on the allied troops, Oudinot would not have resumed the offensive, had he not felt too deeply the reproaches directed against him by Napoleon. During many days he remained on the bank of the Svoiana, in front of the Russian camp, harassing the enemy with his light troops, and endeavouring to force them into repeating the fault which they had already committed on the Drissa at the Sivotschina ford; but the Russians took care not to permit themselves to be caught a second time in a similar snare, and several days passed over without any other result than the useless loss of several hundreds of men from ambushes.

However, Marshal Oudinot, who had taken up an advanced position to the left of Polotsk, and had descended the Drissa as far as Valcintsoui, feared, with some reason, that he might be turned towards his right by the route from Polotsk to Sebej, which was unfurnished with troops. He repassed the Drissa therefore, and proceeded to establish himself between Lazowka and Biéloé, in front of the vast forest of Gumzéléva, which covers Polotsk; and resolving, since his troops had been still further reduced by their later marches, and he had an exaggerated idea of the enemy's force, that he would approach still nearer to Polotsk, lest he should be cut off from this city, and he accordingly established himself behind the river Polota, a little river which runs, covered with hills, farms, and all kinds of buildings, through plains and cultivated fields, and turns round Polotsk, falling into the Dwina somewhat below it.

Established in this position on the 16th of August, he convoked a council of war, for the purpose of discussing the question, whether it would be better to engage the enemy or to repass the Polota and the Dwina, in order to attain a position protected by those two rivers, and in which he might confine his operations to disputing with the enemy the much



larger course of the Dwina. General Saint Cyr, who formed one of the council in his character of commander of the Bavarian army, maintained that it would be useless to engage the enemy and incur the loss which must necessarily arise from such a measure, in case the enemy had failed to follow our troops ; but that if, on the contrary, the Russians had followed in our track, it would be necessary to check them by a vigorous combat, for the purpose of proving that the reason of the retreat was not timidity but the desire of obtaining a more convenient position. At this moment, however, the sound of cannon put an end to all deliberations, and induced every one to run to arms to resist the Russians, who were attempting to cross the Polota. A French and a Bavarian division posted in advance of the Polota, received the Russians with considerable energy, and repulsed them vigorously on its bank, until the approach of night put an end to this preliminary contest. On the following day, Marshal Oudinot, who never failed to exaggerate the Russian force, and considered his position to be a very insecure one, felt much uncertainty with regard to the course which he ought to take. And, indeed, the position which he occupied was not a particularly favourable one, for whilst it was covered in front by a little river, the Polota, there was behind it the larger river Dwina, which was at this part crossed by no other available bridge but that of Polotsk, and presented, therefore, but a very insufficient means of retreat in case of a repulse. As is too often the case in such situations, the Marshal decided to adopt a medium course of action, resolving to defend vigorously, with a portion of his troops, the position he then occupied, and to convey the other portion, with the artillery and baggage, across to the left bank of the Dwina.

Having taken this resolution, he ordered that the banks of the Polota should be vigorously defended, whilst the remainder of the army should traverse Polotsk and cross the Dwina; and the defence was executed accordingly with a vigour which effectually prevented the Russians from advancing a single step ; but unfortunately, the Marshal himself, whose rare courage led him to expose himself too frequently to danger, was severely wounded, and compelled to resign the command to General St. Cyr, who, although wounded himself, immediately assumed it.

The General called together the chief officers to consult with them respecting the best course to pursue for the purpose of escaping from a situation which was exceedingly complicated. As energetic as he was prudent, he explained the inconveniences attending a purely defensive attitude, and showed the danger which existed, that the enemy might attack them on both sides of the Dwina, and proposed that

on the following day, whilst apparently continuing the retreat, advantage should be taken of the covered ground on which the battle had taken place to repass secretly the Dwina and the Polota with the greater portion of the troops, to inflict upon them, if possible, a severe blow, and then to fall back, under cover of this success, behind Polotsk and the Dwina. The objection that the soldiers were too much exhausted by marching and fighting to meet the enemy, having been overruled by the General's declaration that four hours would be sufficient to enable him to inflict upon the Russians a serious check, it was resolved to devote the morning to repose, and to encounter the enemy in a new and final conflict in the afternoon of the following day.

On the 18th of August, accordingly, General St. Cyr proceeded to carry out his proposed plan, leaving his artillery and baggage on the left bank of the Dwina, whither Marshal Oudinot had already sent them, and even moving them along the Oula road, as though he were approaching the grand army, and taking advantage of this feigned movement to concentrate around Polotsk Verdier's division and Doumerc's cuirassiers. Towards the middle of the day he suddenly transported his troops to the right of the Dwina, moved them between this river and the Polota, and ordered the attack.

The Bavarian and French troops were in the ravine of the Polota, the Bavarians on the right, the two French divisions, Legrand and Verdier in the centre, and a moiety of General Merle's Swiss division on the left with Doumerc's cuirassiers. The other moiety of Merle's division was on the hither side of the Polota to hold in check any of the enemy's troops which might attempt to cross this river on the extreme right, and to debouch from the forest of Gumzéléva on our rear.

The Russians on their side were posted beyond the Polota in a semi-circle around our position, and very close to our advanced posts, that they might be ready to throw themselves upon us as soon as we should beat a retreat, as they expected us to do as soon as they perceived the movement of our artillery on the left of the Dwina. At a given signal the whole of our artillery, Bavarian as well as French, suddenly advanced, to the number of sixty pieces, and overwhelmed with missiles the surprised and disconcerted Russians. Their cavalry were not on their horses, and but a portion of their infantry in their ranks, and our divisions, seizing this moment of their confusion to advance to the attack, forced them to fall back in great disorder, leaving the fields and marshes covered with their wounded and their cannon, which they were equally unable to carry off. As soon as they had reached their second line, however, they halted, and presenting to our troops a more determined

front, renewed the combat, which now became furious and desperate. Two hours, however, had scarcely elapsed, when the enemy was repulsed at all points and obliged to resign to us the field of battle, covered with their dead and their artillery.

We were completely victorious along the entire front of the two armies, the enemy was driven back to the edge of the forest, and had our troops been less fatigued, we should have been able by pursuing them into the forest to have taken many prisoners and cannon. Our soldiers were, however, thoroughly exhausted, and paused on the edge of the forest, after a brilliant victory, of which the trophies were one thousand five hundred prisoners, fourteen pieces of cannon, a large quantity of caissons, and three thousand of the enemy slain. Our own loss was less than a thousand men.

The principal advantage of this victory to ourselves was that it forced Count Wittgenstein to fall back, deprived him of any inclination to act on the offensive, at least for some time, and enabled us to halt tranquilly in advance of Polotsk without fear of losing our foragers, however far they might extend their researches. Its sole regret, and it was a regret universally felt, was that which was inspired by the death of the brave and aged Bavarian General, Deroy, who was slain during the action.

This victory, which was known at Smolensk on the 19th of August, the day succeeding that on which that city had been entered by our troops, was a source of extreme satisfaction to Napoleon, and caused him to be just, at length, with regard to General St. Cyr, whose energetic determination had regained for us on the Dwina the prestige of victory. He sent a Marshal's bâton to the General, numerous rewards to the French and Bavarian troops, which had equally distinguished themselves, and granted donations to the widows and orphans of the Bavarian officers fully equal to those granted to the widows and orphans of French officers. He ordered, also, particular honours to be paid to the memory of General Deroy, the loss of whom and of General Gudin, were at present the greatest losses which the army had suffered. How soon, alas! was it to suffer losses far greater, or at least, far more numerous?

These two victories of Gorodeczna and Polotsk, which were obtained on the 12th and 18th of August respectively, seemed to guarantee the security of our flanks, and to enable us to advance still further should there appear any hope of obtaining a decisive victory on the Moscow route.



This was Napoleon's own view, and calculating that the Austrians and Saxons would be sufficiently strong to hold Tormazoff in check on his right, and that the French and Bavarians would be equally able to stop Wittgenstein on his left, without taking into account Marshal Macdonald, who had been left between Polotsk and Riga, he could see no cause in the position of his wings which should induce him to halt if there should appear any opportunity by making a forward movement, either of concluding the war, or of obtaining glory. The only source of misfortune that could be foreseen was in the probable return of Admiral Tchitchakoff, whose troops would become available by the establishment of peace between the Russians and Turks; but as the 9th corps, under Marshal Victor, would afford, by its advance from Tilsit to Wilna, a resource against almost every imaginable accident, Napoleon, in forming his final resolutions, had only to take into account the relative positions of the grand army under his own personal command, and the grand Russian army under the command of Barclay de Tolly, and now on its retreat upon the Moscow route. In this direction his thoughts were constantly turned, sometimes inclining to the plan of halting at Smolensk for the purpose of reorganising Poland and preparing winter quarters for his troops, at the cost of exciting all the ideas which could not fail to spread throughout Europe, respecting a mode of action so opposite to his character; and sometimes determining that it was absolutely necessary to plunge into the depths of Russia for the purpose of striking, before the end of the season, a blow of too decisive a nature to be resisted by a character so fickle as that of the Emperor Alexander. In the meantime, he received those reports from his two Generals of the advanced guard which could not fail to afford him reasons for deciding to adopt the one or the other of these two courses of action.

Murat and Davoust were following, in fact, with their cavalry and infantry respectively, the grand Russian army, which was retreating by the Moscow route. They had entered Solowievo after some skirmishes with the enemy's rear guard, and leaving to others the care of preserving this post, had hastened on to Dorogobouge, the last point at which the Moscow route encounters the sinuosities of the Dnieper. The reports sent by the two commanders were as various as their characters. The brilliant but inconsiderate valour of Murat, prodigal of his cavalry, had come into collision with the firm and calm temperament of Marshal Davoust, who was most averse to making any useless sacrifice of either the lives or strength of his



troops, and who, by advancing less quickly than others, reaped the advantage of never having to retrace his steps. They had not advanced in company more than a few days before bitter altercations had arisen between them, and this spirit of dissension was fully displayed in the reports which they presented to the Emperor.

The Russian troops, of which the retreat was conducted by Barclay de Tolly, had retired with firmness and good order; retreating by echelons, placing cannon and tirailleurs at all points at which it was possible to hold our cavalry in check, and defending them by these means until the arrival of our infantry, when the troops which had halted, fell back behind other echelons equally well posted. There was nothing in this method of proceeding which evinced anxiety or difficulty, and indeed, it displayed, on the contrary, a system of resistance which would increase in firmness until the moment when the enemy should consider that they had a favourable opportunity for meeting us in a general engagement. Murat, however, observing but very superficially what was passing before him, and only considering this successive abandonment of positions which they had occupied, asserted that the Russian troops were demoralised, and that it would only be necessary for our troops to come up with them by a series of rapid marches to obtain over them an easy triumph. Marshal Davoust stoutly maintained, on the contrary, that he had never seen a retreat better conducted, or one which left less opportunity for obtaining a victory by simply galloping in the enemy's track. He considered that we should soon have to engage them in some position chosen by themselves; and that we should, consequently, take care to lead our forces up to it in the best possible order. But however opposite were the opinions of the two Generals of our advanced guard on most points, they were unanimous in supposing that we should soon encounter the enemy in a pitched battle.

As they approached Darogobouge, our troops perceived the Russians drawn up in battle array behind a little river named Ouja, which fell into the Dnieper on our left at a place called Ouswiat; and in such attitude and numbers as seemed to show the imminence of a general engagement. The little river which we had to cross in order to reach them was no serious obstacle, although its banks were muddy and difficult; and, moreover, it was hoped that by ascending a little to the right we should be able to turn the Russians, and probably succeed in driving them into the angle formed by the Ouja with the Dnieper. There was a good opportunity, therefore, at this point, of encountering the enemy in a

grand and decisive engagement, and on the evening of the 22nd, a report to this effect was sent to Napoleon from our advanced guard, which had left Smolensk on the 20th; whilst the Polish army, which marched at two leagues on our right, proceeded to take up a position towards the sources of the Ouja, the point by which it was hoped we might succeed in turning the enemy.

The conjectures of the generals of our advanced guard were in accordance with the actual state of affairs. The judicious and intrepid Barclay de Tolly, after having courageously borne the disparaging remarks of which he was the object, had at length given way before the taunts levelled against him from all ranks of his army; for when it was urged upon him that there was great danger of the rapid demoralisation of troops, amongst which contempt for their leaders began to be so widely spread, he determined to abandon his plan of a retreat into the interior of Russia, and to encounter our troops immediately in a desperate battle. He sent, therefore, the quarter-master general, Colonel Toll, to select a field of battle, and the Colonel had chosen the position which presented itself behind the Ouja, in front of Darogobouge. Arriving there on the 22nd, Barclay de Tolly altered the position of the second army, commanded by Bagration, and posted it on his left, at the very point at which our generals considered it possible to turn the Russian line.

Napoleon received the report of the generals of his advanced guard some hours after it had been despatched, for although the space to be traversed had occupied the troops of the advanced guard three days, it was only a journey of ten or twelve hours to a courier; and as soon as he had received it hastened to quit Smolensk, for the purpose of hastening that decisive and important event which he considered absolutely necessary to support him in the position in which he found himself placed. The single fact of his departing from Smolensk, several days' march, with all his forces would of itself, in great measure, decide the grave question which at this time so deeply occupied his attention, but the reasons which urged him to seek this battle even at the distance of some marches, were so powerful that he could not hesitate to do so; and on the 24th accordingly, he set out with the guard. At the same time, although he still remained undecided whether to winter in Poland or to march on to Moscow, he made all his preparations as though he had decided upon the latter measure, for he could not but foresee that circumstances might constrain him to adopt it, and he was unwilling to move a step in advance without having taken in his rear precautions worthy of his foresight.

He had already devoted some days at Smolensk to the arrangement of those military establishments which he never failed to form on his route, and which were not, unfortunately, always finished at his departure. He left there a division of his young guard under General Delaborde, to remain until the detachments still in the rear should come up to garrison the important city, and summoned thither those which he had left at Witebsk where they would be replaced by others. He changed the route of the army, and instead of causing it to pass by the points which he had himself traversed, namely, Gloubokoé, Ouchatsch, Beschenkowiczy, and Witebsk, determined that it should pass by Smorgoni, Minsk, Borisow, Orscha, since this line of route was the shorter.

He added to the Polish division Dombrowski, which had been detached from the corps of Poniatowski and posted at Mohilew for the purpose of connecting the grand army with the Austro-Saxon corps, a brigade of light cavalry, that it might be able to extend its surveillance to a greater distance, and more fitted to watch our new base of operations. To Marshals Saint-Cyr and Macdonald, who guarded the Dwina, and to Prince Schwarzenberg, who guarded the lower Dnieper, he wrote informing them that he was about to advance for the purpose of engaging the enemy in a decisive battle, and desiring them to be careful to protect the flanks of the grand army whilst it should be engaged in the attempt to inflict a mortal blow on the Russian army, and finally, he commanded the Duke of Belluna to prepare to proceed to Wilna, since, from that central point the 9th corps would be the resource of that one of our generals who should be left to fight the one or other of our wings.

Having sent forward the guard on the morning of the 24th, and ordered Ney, who followed Davoust, to approach close to the head of the army, and Prince Eugene, who had advanced upon the left by Doukhowtchina to march upon Darogobouge, he himself set out towards evening, and continued his journey through the night that he might reach at sunrise the place where he hoped to engage the enemy, which was the object of his most ardent wishes.

On his arrival, however, he found that the probability of a decisive engagement, at least for the present, had almost entirely vanished, the fact being, that after a single glance at the position of which he was to occupy the part most difficult to defend, Prince Bagration had declared it to be a most ill chosen one, insulting General Toll when he attempted to justify its selection. The battle, therefore, was now postponed by the desire of the very persons who had been most eager in demanding it, and Barclay de Tolly had consequently broken up his camp



and rapidly passed through Dorogobouge on his way to Wiasma, where, it was said, there could be found a position in every way much more advantageous.

The acute discernment of Napoleon and the great experience of Davoust, did not fail to convince them that these halts of the Russian troops followed by sudden retreats, were not the result of irresolution, but rather the hesitation of an army determined to fight, but anxious to encounter its enemies on a field of battle, which should afford them the greatest possible advantages; and they clearly perceived that within two or three days the Russians would be ready to encounter the French troops in that pitched battle for which the latter had so frequently offered them the opportunity. This being the state of affairs, Napoleon, as he had already passed the three stages between Smolensk and Dorogobouge did not hesitate to advance still further over the three which separated Dorogobouge from Wiasma, where it was probable that he would at length come up with the Russian army. Nevertheless, as he was not the man to deceive himself respecting the consequences of his actions, he foresaw that the adoption of this measure would very possibly compel him to proceed to Moscow; since it would be scarcely possible, should he gain a great victory at some marches distant from Moscow, to pause and renounce the immense *éclat* of leading the French troops into this distant capital of the Czars. Setting out from Smolensk without having come to any fixed determination, he formed his final resolution at Dorogobouge, and on the 26th gave orders which seemed to have been framed in accordance with the necessities of a march which should only terminate at Moscow.

Although on the eve of his departure from Smolensk, Napoleon had devoted his attention to his base of operations, it occupied his thoughts still more deeply, now that he was about to advance so great a distance into the country. This base had at first been at Dantzic and Thorn, then at Königsberg and Kowno, and subsequently at Wilna, successively changing its position in accordance with the progress of the extraordinary march of the French troops across Poland and Russia; and it was evident that its new position should be at Smolensk; this city being the connecting link between the Dwina and the Dnieper, and connecting them also with Wilna and Kowno. Napoleon resolved, therefore, to summon to Smolensk, immediately, the corps of Marshal Victor, consisting of about thirty thousand men, that it might remain there to be ready to support either Marshal St. Cyr or Prince Schwarzenberg in case either of these two should encounter any reverse. At the same time, Napoleon consi-



dered that it was far more probable that these commanders would obtain great successes, rather than suffer any reverse, even so great as being reduced to the defensive; he regarded the corps under Marshal Victor's command as destined, in fact, to face the Russian troops which might return from Turkey. As he was unwilling, however, that this corps should be scattered in small garrisons, he had already marched upon Wilna various Saxon, Polish, Westphalian, and Hanseatic regiments, which had, hitherto, remained at Dantzic and Königsberg, and he now ordered that they all should be marched to Minsk and Smolensk, for the purpose of providing at these places such garrisons and detachments as might be necessary. As a substitute for these troops at Dantzic he had previously summoned thither one of Marshal Augereau's divisions commanded by General Lagrange, and he now determined to move this division itself to Smolensk, that it might from thence reinforce the various corps of the grand army, supply the vacancies which might be caused in the ranks by future battles, and in the meantime mark out the route. This division was to be replaced at Dantzic by another of Marshal Augereau's divisions, that of General Heudelet; and as the Marshal would be entirely deprived of the division which was to be sent to Smolensk, Napoleon resolved to recompense him for its loss by ordering General Grenier, whom, in his distrust of the court of Naples he had posted at the head of a corps composed of excellent French troops and foreign troops in the service of France, between Rome and Naples, to march with his French troops, which would form a division of fifteen thousand of the best soldiers in Italy, with the utmost speed consistent with prudence, upon Augsburg. By this measure the corps of Marshal Augereau would receive a larger number of troops than it had lost, and Napoleon considered, holding Murat as he did, under his own hand, and having no reason to fear his fickleness, that the Neapolitan army, together with the regiments of Isenberg and Latour-d'Auvergne, would be sufficient protection for the South of Italy.

Thus, with a corps of fifty thousand men between Berlin and Dantzic, with strong garrisons at Dantzic, Königsberg, Memel, Kowno, Wilna, and Witebsk; with the two corps of Marshals Macdonald and St. Cyr on the Dwina, with that of Prince Schwarzenberg on the Dnieper, with an excellent Polish division at Mohilew, to connect Prince Schwarzenberg's corps with the grand army, with the corps of the Duke of Belluna at Smolensk, perfectly ready to succour either of his wings which might be in peril, or to follow his own march to Moscow; and finally, with a continual succession

of battalions serving as garrisons in all the towns on the route, until they should continue their march for the purpose of recruiting the grand army; with all these resources at his disposal we say, Napoleon was able to persuade himself that he was safe, and thought not of comparing his own position with that of Charles XII.

The vast measures which he had taken were certainly worthy of his keen foresight, and seemed to be such as must secure him against all accidents; but yet one of them was the subject of much disapproval on the part of his lieutenants, too timidly expressed and unfortunately justified by the event. This measure was that which consisted in leaving divided into two corps, the troops destined to guard the Dwina. The corps of Marshal St. Cyr now composed of twenty thousand French and ten thousand Bavarian troops, would have been sufficient perhaps, under a very enterprising general, and with proper provisions, to have vanquished Wittgenstein's corps; but when reduced, as it was, to twenty-four thousand men, by the necessary absence of numerous foraging parties, and situated at great distances from his appuis, in the midst of unknown regions, we cannot be surprised that even under the command of so able a General as Marshal St. Cyr, it should have effected no decisive operation. Marshal Macdonald with twenty-four thousand men at the most, situated between Riga and Dunabourg, could neither take the former place, nor maintain communications with Marshal St. Cyr. But had these two corps united, in accordance with Marshal Macdonald's proposition, they might have overwhelmed Wittgenstein, have advanced beyond the Dwina, have established themselves at Sebej, have thus forced Wittgenstein to fall back upon Pskow, and have gained on this side a decided superiority over the enemy. It is true that Courland would have been exposed to the incursions of the garrison of Dunabourg, and that it would have been impossible in this case to have besieged Riga, to the possession of which Napoleon attached so much importance. But if we had occupied Tilsit in force, and had well guarded the course of the Niemen as far as Kowno, the incursions of the Cossacks into Courland could not have had very important results; and with regard to the siege of Riga, it was very improbable that a corps of less than twenty-four thousand men, compelled to disperse a third of its effective strength in detachments, would be capable of executing an operation of such difficulty.

With the exception of this measure, which was the result of Napoleon's fatal desire to attain too many objects at once, the numerous plans which Napoleon now carried out were well

sued to the existing state of affairs. Perceiving the difficulty of securing the preservation of the line of communications between the grand army and its rear, through a line infested with bands of Cossacks, he ordered the governors of Minsk, Barisow, Orscha, and Smolensk to furnish from their several garrisons, each of a series of little citadels which he had constructed along the line of communication, with a hundred infantry, fifteen cavalry, and two pieces of cannon; by this means securing the uninterrupted transmission of information and orders. And further, as he intended, should the loss of a great battle and the capture of Moscow fail to bring Alexander to submission, to return to winter in Poland, he made arrangements for procuring either by means of money or requisitions a quantity of provisions more than sufficient for the supply of his army during a year. And it was very possible that this vast amount of food and provender might be raised in Poland, especially by the employment of the treasury which Napoleon now had at his disposal, consisting partly of a great sum in money, and partly of a still larger sum in false paper roubles which he had forged in Paris without scruple, considering himself justified by the example of the coalitionists who at another period filled France with forged assignats.

All these precautions having been taken, Napoleon moved his troops from Dorogobouge in the following order. Murat with the light cavalry of Marshals Davoust, and Ney, the cavalry of reserve of Generals Nansouty and Montbrun, with a considerable force of artillery attiléé, formed the advanced guard; in immediate succession followed Marshal Davoust, having one of his divisions always ready to support the cavalry. After Davoust marched Ney, and after Ney the guard. On the right, Prince Poniatowski's corps, and Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, at two or three leagues distance from the grand route, endeavoured to outstrip the enemy and to obtain information. Prince Eugene occupied a similar position on the left, also endeavouring to outstrip the Russian troops, and preceded by the cavalry of General Grouchy.

The quartier-general followed, with the parks of artillery, the engineers, and a thousand waggons laden with provisions for the guard, which Napoleon was unwilling to accustom to habits of pillage, and for the general supply of the army on the day on which the troops might be concentrated to engage the enemy in battle. With the exception of Davoust's corps, the troops of which had eight days provisions on their backs, besides a reserve sufficient for three or four days conveyed by waggons, the other troops were to procure their



subsistence from the districts through which they might pass. It had been found, in fact, that the villages were less completely dismantled than had been at first supposed, and that on the lateral routes, especially, where the Russians had not time to complete their work of destruction, there still remained a large quantity of provisions. The army was freed from a large portion of its baggage train, and even from the bulkier portion of its pontoon equipages, since the rivers on this central plateau which separate the Baltic from the Black Sea, are almost all close to their source and consequently neither rapid nor deep. With respect to the constitution of the army itself:—as it had lost about fifteen thousand men in engagements with the enemy; about fourteen thousand by the fatigues of the march, and had left a division of the guard at Smolensk; an Italian division and General Pajul's light cavalry in observation on the Witebsk route; it was now reduced from one hundred and seventy-five thousand to about one hundred and forty-five thousand men, but these were all most excellent troops. The weather was perfectly serene, and the line of march lay along a large and fine road bordered with many rows of birch trees, traversing green plains; and although the Generals were desponding, the troops themselves superstitiously trusted to the guidance of the Emperor's star. The rumour had already spread that they were on their way to Moscow! . . . To Moscow! cried the soldiers, to Moscow! And they followed Napoleon as in old times the Macedonian soldiers had followed Alexander to Babylon.

On the 28th the army reached Wiasma, a pretty town, well inhabited, and traversed by a river, the bridges across which had been broken. The Russians had set fire to it, in accordance with the plan they had adopted, before quitting it, but had had too little time to effect this object completely, and our soldiers were, therefore, able to save some of its houses, together with a portion of the provisions which it contained; but unfortunately, although they did not hesitate to throw themselves into the midst of the flames to check the extension of the devastation, they found it a matter of great difficulty to do so, on account of the circumstance that the greater portion of the habitations were constructed of wood; and when their exertions had been repaid by a certain degree of success, their own carelessness with regard to the fires at which they cooked their rations was the cause of the renewed spread of the conflagration.

According to the information received by the advanced guard, and which was, indeed, true, our army should have found the Russians at Wiasma ready to engage in that terri-



ble conflict on which they had at length resolved ; and which they had determined to accept as soon as they should have found a position in which they could advantageously engage our troops. But the fact was that the Russians had considered that there was no such position in the neighbourhood of Wiamsa, and had determined, therefore, to take up their ground at Czarewo-Zaimitché, situated two days' march beyond Wiamsa. It seemed to be, and was, the case, that as soon as Barclay de Tolly had resolved upon a battle in compliance with the wishes of Bagration and his party, the latter became excessively fastidious with respect to the position in which they should engage us. And we may observe in this another of those many circumstances which concurred to induce the continuance of that system of retreat which tended to draw us into the depths of Russia.

In the meantime, Napoleon, being convinced that the enemy intended, sooner or later, to risk a battle with our troops, was little troubled by the fact of having to follow them one or two marches further, for the purpose of affording them the opportunity, and resolved, therefore, to follow them along the Ghjat road. But sad presentiments began to fill the minds of all the persons who surrounded him. Every day the army was further diminished by some hundreds of men and horses, lost in foraging expeditions, or overwhelmed by fatigue ; and at length Berthier, with extreme reserve, ventured to make some representations to the Emperor relative to the danger of pushing the expedition on which he was engaged too far, and of attempting to accomplish it in a single campaign instead of two. But Napoleon, who was perfectly aware of all that could be said on the subject, and who was irritated at hearing from another the expression of thoughts which oppressed his own soul, received the Major General's representations very coolly, and replied to them with the reproach with which he usually met any similar objections.—"And you too, you are also one of those who would fain hang back?" he began, and then continued in an insulting strain, comparing him to an old woman, telling him that he might return, if he pleased, to Paris, and that he could very well dispense with his services. Berthier, much humbled by the answer, replied in accents of extreme distress, and retiring to his quarters, refrained during several days from taking his meals, as he usually did, at the Emperor's table.

Another incident, equally to be regretted, took place at the same time. We have seen above, that a spirit of great dissension existed between Davoust and Murat, whilst commanding together the advanced guard ; and at length, when they had reached Wiasma, Davoust, irritated at the prodigal manner

in which Murat expended his cavalry, refused to grant him his infantry, being unwilling to see it treated as Murat had treated the horse. In spite of Murat's claims as a king and brother-in-law of the Emperor, Davoust persisted in his refusal, before the whole army forbidding General Compans to obey the King of Naples; and it is difficult to say to what extent the quarrel might have grown, had it not been appeased by the presence of Napoleon, who, whilst he considered Davoust to be in the right, felt hurt at the little respect shown by the Marshal to one so nearly allied to the Imperial family, and, accordingly, inflicted on him a public rebuke, by deciding that the division Compans should obey Murat's orders as long as it formed a portion of the advanced guard.

On the 31st, the French army set out from Wiasma for Ghjat, hoping to find the Russians at Czarewo-Zaimitché; but on arriving there they found that the enemy had again retreated, as at Wiasma and Dorogobouge. Still it was resolved on our side to continue the pursuit, and indeed, all the stragglers whom our army met unanimously declared that the Russians intended to give us battle, and only awaited reinforcements, which were expected from the centre of the empire. In the course of the day (the 31st) the light cavalry took prisoner a Cossack belonging to the corps of Platow, whom, as he appeared very intelligent, the Emperor conversed with personally through an interpreter.

The Cossack, ignorant of his interrogator's rank, discoursed freely on the affairs of the war; boasted of the services of the Cossacks, who, he declared, had saved the Russian army from being vanquished; affirmed that a great battle would take place very shortly, and that the French would have no chance of being victorious in it, unless it took place within three days. And added that the French were commanded, it was said, by a General named Bonaparte, who usually vanquished all his enemies, but who would probably be less fortunate in the approaching contest with the Russian army, which was about to receive immense reinforcements &c. . . . Napoleon was much interested by this conversation, smiling at many of the young Cossack's replies, and at length wishing to see what effect the knowledge of his presence would have upon this child of the Don, directed the interpreter to inform him that General Bonaparte was the person with whom he had been discoursing. Scarcely had the interpreter given him this information, when the Cossack, as though overwhelmed with astonishment, became suddenly dumb, and kept his eyes immovably fixed on the warrior whose name had reached even him across the

steppes of the East. All his loquacity had vanished and given place to a sentiment of genuine and silent admiration. Napoleon gave him a present and permitted him once more to go, free as a bird that returns to the fields of its birth.

In the course of the day, the advanced guard reached Ghjat, a little town tolerably well stored with provisions, especially grain, a quantity of which our soldiers were able to rescue from the flames. On the following day, the 1st of September, our head quarters were established there. A sudden fall of rain had converted the dust of the Muscovite plains into a thick mud, and Napoleon, fearing the loss of men and horses should he attempt to advance through it, determined to halt at Ghjat during two or three days. As he had determined to follow the Russians to Moscow, he felt certain of meeting them, and considered it wise, therefore, to advance in such a manner as would enable him to do so with an undiminished and unexhausted army. He ordered consequently, all the generals to review and inspect minutely the soldiers under their command, to provide them with two or three days' provisions, and to endeavour to inspire them as much as possible with an enthusiastic expectation of the great impending struggle. But there was, in truth, little need of this latter measure, for our troops were ardently desirous for the event which they believed would put an end to their fatigues, and be one of the most glorious of their glorious lives.

The moment when the battle was to take place had, indeed, at length arrived, and the Russians had resolved no longer to decline it; nor would they have done so at Czarewo-Zaimitché, had not a fresh delay been rendered necessary by a change which had taken place in the army, and which had its origin at Saint Petersburg in the very bosom of the Russian court.

When Alexander was driven, as to a certain extent he was, from his army, he had retired to Moscow to fulfil there the office which had been represented to him as the one most suited to his dignity and most conducive to the defence of the empire, namely, that of exciting the enthusiasm and the efforts of his people against the French. Upon his arrival at Moscow he had convoked the corps of the noblesse and merchants, for the purpose of demanding of them some genuine proof of their devotion to their prince and country. The governor Rostopchin had been charged with the superintendence of these convocations, and had experienced but little difficulty in inflaming spirits which the approach of Alexander towards the capital already filled with patriotic ardour, but at the sight of Alexander himself, coming to demand the support of the nation against a foreign invader, their



excitement had burst forth in sobs and cries of affection. The noblesse had voted a levy of one man in ten on their domains ; and the commercial body had voted considerable subsidies ; the several supplies being together capable of furnishing, it was said, a militia force of twenty-four thousand men for the government of Moscow. And similar levies, independently of those which the Emperor had ordered to be raised in the imperial domains, were to be raised in all the governments which were not occupied by the enemy.

After he had received these testimonies of ardent and sincere patriotism, Alexander had returned to St. Petersburg for the purpose of taking all the measures necessary for carrying out this species of levy en masse, and to preside over the general direction of the military operations. The noblesse which was at this moment resident in the capital was composed of old Russians, whom their age forced to live far from camps, and who were delighted with having Alexander in the centre of his empire, to a certain degree in their own hands, far from the violent impressions of the battle field, and far, especially, from the seductive powers of Napoleon, one interview with whom at the advanced posts after a battle would, they feared, lead the Emperor anew into the toils of the policy of Tilsit. MM. Araktchejev, Armfeld, Stein, and all the Russian or German councillors who, since the departure from Wilna had gone to attend Alexander at St. Petersburg, surrounded him, held him, as it were, besieged, and permitted him to take no resolution which was not in accordance with their own passions ; and in the prosecution of this plan they had derived considerable assistance from the presence of Lord Cathcart, the General who had commanded the British army before Copenhagen, and who had represented England at St. Petersburg since the conclusion of peace between that power and the Russian court.

This peace had been concluded immediately after the commencement of hostilities with France, but not before, as Alexander had promised to M. de Lauriston ; and had been negotiated by M. de Suchtelen on the part of Russia, and Mr. Thornton, the English Agent, who had been sent to Sweden, and stipulated for the concurrence of the whole strength of each empire in the prosecution of the new war. Lord Cathcart had arrived immediately after the peace had been signed, and he concurred with the German councillors and the Prince Royal of Sweden, that success could only be obtained in the war by perseverance, that two or three battles would, doubtless, be lost, but that a single victory would suffice to destroy the French, advanced, as they were, into the interior of the empire. Alexander, who was



wounded to the heart by the haughty manner in which Napoleon had behaved towards him during the last three years, and at the open indifference with which he had received the overtures of peace made by the Russian court, was determined to carry on the war now that it had been begun, to the utmost extent, trusting in the efficacy of his system of a continued retreat. At the same time, the pursuance of this system was necessarily attended by some humiliation and considerable loss, since not only the towns of Smolensk, Wiasma, and Ghjat, had fallen a prey to these ruinous tactics, but also, all the chateaux and villages situate on the French route, through a space of twelve or fifteen leagues. And in addition to these ill consequences, was the fact that the generals who conducted the retreat were called cowards or traitors who did not dare to face the French in battle, and who preferred to oppose them rather with a devastated country than with their lives.

Alexander having ceased to be responsible for the conduct of the war since his departure from the army, all the odium of the subsequent military events had fallen upon the unfortunate Barclay de Tolly. To have lost Wilna, Witebsk, and Smolensk, without a battle, to be in retreat, on the road to Moscow, to have given up the heart of the empire to the enemy without having first immolated thousands of men, was, according to the popular notion, a treasonable crime, and the masses as they pronounced the name of Barclay de Tolly, which was not Russian, declared that they were not surprised at so many reverses, since all the foreigners who were in the service of Russia betrayed her. The cry of popular passion, swelled by the voices of those who envied him spread not only throughout the army, but throughout the whole country, denouncing Barclay de Tolly as the author of the catastrophe at Smolensk. And yet what could the unfortunate General have done? Nothing as we have seen! He had sacrificed twelve thousand Russians in attempting to save this place, and if he had committed any error, it was in having attempted to defend a town not capable of being seriously defended.

Barclay de Tolly was consequently a lost man; for even the persons who were thoroughly aware of the truth, perceiving as they did the outrageous fury of which he was the object, and the insubordination which was spreading throughout the army from this cause, advised that he should be sacrificed. In the midst of this excitement was one name in everyone's mouth, and it was that of General Kutusof, that old one-eyed soldier whom Admiral Tchitchakoff had replaced on the Danube, who had previously lost the battle of Austerlitz, and who nevertheless had become, by virtue of his

thoroughly Russian name and his having been a pupil of Suwarrou's, the favorite of public opinion. It must be added, that Kutusof had restored the fortunes of Russia in the last campaign against the Turks, and that although seventy years of age, so perfectly worn out by war and pleasure as to be scarcely capable of holding himself on his horse, thoroughly corrupt, false, perfidious, and a liar, he was possessed of consummate prudence and had the art to make himself the idol of the party which was ardent for the plan of engaging the enemy, whilst he was himself the decided partisan of the system of retreat. And no man could be more capable than he was of gaining the mastery over men's minds, of directing them as he chose, of ruling them by affecting passions which he had not, and of opposing Napoleon by patience, the only arm with which he could be successfully fought. Providence, which had prepared an adversary for him in the extremities of the Peninsula; a man of resolute will and keen intellect, firm as the rocks of Torres-Vedras—Lord Wellington—had also prepared an adversary for him in the depths of Russia, in the person of a man who had not that inflexibility of character which was absolutely necessary at the extremities of the Peninsula where there was no more room to fall back, but who was astute and patient, as flexible as the space in which he would have to plunge, who knew both how to resist and to yield, and who was capable, not indeed of vanquishing Napoleon, but of deceiving him, and of thus defeating him. It is not with equals but with inferiors Providence opposes the genius which it has resolved to punish, as though it desired thus to render the punishment more severe.

Old General Kutusof was therefore the second adversary who was about to stop Napoleon at the other extremity of the European continent, and it must be acknowledged that popular passion had seldom less erred than in pointing out Kutusof as the man to be selected by their Emperor. But when we speak of the popular passion we do not wish to intimate that the populace of St. Petersburg attempted to compel the Emperor to accept their selection of his Generals, but that the passions which rule a court even may have a popular character, and do have such a character when wise and foolish, young and old, men and women, all concur in demanding something of which they know only the name, being alike ignorant of its real qualities and unfurnished with genuine reasons for desiring it. With such a popular passion, then, were the most aristocratic circles of the capital inspired when they demanded the appointment of Kutusof who, since his return from Turkey, had very hypocritically

placed himself at the head of the St. Petersburg militia, thus obtruding himself upon public notice. Alexander had no confidence in him, considering him to be wanting in firmness and skill on the battle field ; and indeed, Kutusof's sole merit as a warrior was, and it was a very great one, that he was profoundly skilful in giving the general direction to the conduct of a war. Overwhelmed, however, by public opinion, Alexander determined to select Kutusof as commander in chief of the united armies of Bagration and Barclay de Tolly, leaving these two Generals in command of their respective troops. General Benningsen, who had followed Alexander to St. Petersburg, and whose character, in spite of some disadvantageous recollections attached to it, would have satisfied the popular leaning of the moment, had he borne a Russian name, was nominated Kutusof's chief of the staff.

As soon as he had received his appointment, Kutusof set out for the army, and it was his arrival at Czarewo-Zaimitché which had prevented the Russians from meeting the French troops in battle. Colonel Toll, who remained quarter-master general, had found in the environs of Mojaïsk, twenty-five leagues distant from Moscow, at a place named Borodino, a position which offered as many advantages to an army acting on the defensive as it could hope to find in the species of country in which the campaign was being carried on, and General Kutusof who, although disapproving of actually encountering the enemy, was willing to fight one battle that it might afford him the opportunity of declining many others, had adopted the ground selected by Colonel Toll, had proceeded in person to Borodino, and ordered such field-works as would add the defences of art to those of nature. The army, which had been much weakened, not only by the contests at Smolensk and Valoutina, but also by its incessant marches, from which, although very well provided, it had suffered almost as much as the French troops, was now reinforced by fifteen thousand men from the reserve and dépôt battalions, and ten thousand of the Moscow militia, now numbered one hundred and forty thousand men, and, posted at Borodino behind earth intrenchments, awaited Napoleon, under its old General Kutusof, who, being forced to commit a fault, took care, with prudent resignation, to render it as innocuous as possible.

A general acquaintance with the above facts had persuaded Napoleon, that he should encounter beyond Ghjat the Russian army prepared to meet his troops in battle. But at this very moment he found himself checked for a time by the weather, which, during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of September



was terribly adverse, turning the roads which had hitherto been tolerably good, into quagmires. The horses died by thousands of fatigue and inanition, the cavalry was gradually disappearing, and there was great reason to fear that there would be no means of carrying forward the artillery, the absence of which would have rendered it impossible to engage in any great battle. At the same time, the bivouacs, cold and wretched, were in the highest degree injurious to the health of the men. Napoleon attributed the evil to error on the part of his lieutenants, and severely rebuked Marshal Ney, who lost some hundreds of his troops each day. His corps had been reduced to subsist on such provisions as it could gather on its march, and had been as much weakened by the exertions rendered necessary by this state of destitution as it might have been by a bloody battle. Ney had revenged himself for the rebuke he had received, by recounting the sufferings endured by his troops in their too protracted marches, and declaring that to continue the movement in advance would be to expose the army to perish. Murat, who was partly to blame for the evils complained of, confirmed Ney's statement, and Berthier, who did not dare to repeat his representations, supported it by a sullen silence. Napoleon was strongly moved by these assertions, and replied to them, "Ah! well, if the weather have not changed by to-morrow we will halt," . . . which was equivalent to saying that he should have considered the bad season to have commenced, and would have returned to Smolensk! And never would Fortune, who threw a fog over his fleet to enable it to escape from Nelson when he went to Egypt, who granted him the little road by which he turned the fort of Bard, who granted him the sun of Ansterlitz—never would Fortune, we say, have more manifestly favoured him than she would have now, had she now sent him three or four days of bad weather. But Fortune no longer favoured him so much as to oppose his wishes on this occasion for his own advantage; and on the morning of the 4th of September there arose a radiant sun and a lively breeze, such as would most probably dry the roads within the space of a few hours. "The lot is cast!" cried Napoleon, "let us advance! Let us march to meet the Russians!" and he ordered Murat and Davoust to set forward about noon, when the roads would have been in some degree dried, directing their movement upon Gridnewa, which was half way from Ghjat to Borodino. The remainder of the army was ordered to follow the movement made by the advanced guard.

Obedient to destiny the army set out and proceeded to pass the night at Gridnewa. On the following day, the



5th of September, it resumed its march, and advanced towards the plain of Borodino, a place destined to become as famous as Zama, Pharsala, or Actium. On the line of march stood a celebrated abbey, that of Kolotskoi, a great building flanked with towers, the roofs of which, being formed of coloured tiles, contrasted vividly with the sombre hues of the surrounding landscape. During many days the troops had been advancing along the elevated plateaux which separated the waters of the Baltic from those of the Black Sea, and the Caspian, and on setting out from Ghjat, began to descend the slopes, from which the Moskowa on the left, and the Protwa on the right, flow by the Oka into the Volga, by the Volga into the Caspian sea. The landscape appeared to sink towards the horizon, and to be covered with thick forests, whilst a sky half veiled with the light autumnal clouds, served to increase its sad and savage aspect. All the villages were either burned or deserted, and there remained only a few monks at the Abbey of Kolotskoi. Our army left this abbey on the left, and continued its march along the course of a little river now half dried up, called the Kolocza, flowing direct east, the direction which had been constantly pursued by our troops since the passage of the Niemen. The cavalry rear guards, after a certain amount of resistance on the part of the enemy, which had been speedily overcome, threw themselves upon the right of the Kolocza, and hastened to take up a position at the foot of a fortified mamelon, where there was a large detachment of about fifteen thousand men of all arms.

Napoleon paused to consider this plain, on which was to be decided the fate of the world. The Kolocza flowed right in front of us, traversing a bed which was by turns either muddy or almost dried up, until, having arrived at the village of Borodino, it turned to the left, passing for more than a league through hills considerably escarped, and at length, after a thousand windings, losing itself in the Moskowa. The hills on our left, at the foot of which passed the Kolocza, appeared to be covered with the Russian army, which also extended over the chain of hills on the right of the river, this latter portion of its line being much the weaker, since the hills here were much less escarped, and protected at the foot by simple ravines instead of the course of the river; and although the most considerable works had been constructed at this point, they were not such as would offer any invincible obstacle to the attack of our troops.

The first work which opposed the advance of our troops to the right of the Kolocza was a redoubt, more advanced than the others, constructed on a mamelon towards which the

Russian rear guard had fallen back ; and Napoleon considered that it would be necessary to gain immediate possession of it, in order to be able to establish himself at his leisure on this portion of the plain, and uninterruptedly make his preparations for the impending battle. He ordered, therefore, Murat and Compans, whose cavalry and infantry were at his immediate disposal, to carry this redoubt, which was called the Schwardino redoubt, from a neighbouring village of that name. Murat with his cavalry, and Compans with his infantry, had already passed the Kolocza, and were now on the right of the plain, and towards nightfall Murat forced the Russian cavalry to fall back, and thus cleared the ground for the advance of our infantry. On an elevation in front of the redoubt General Compans posted some pieces of cannon and a body of tirailleurs, and after a vigorous cannonade deployed the 57th and 61st of the line to the right, the 25th and 111th to the left, personally directing the former two regiments, and entrusting the latter two to General Dupellin. Our troops advanced with the utmost energy and firmness across a little ravine which lay between them and the redoubt, and having reached the further side exchanged with the Russian infantry during several minutes a fire of musketry of the most murderous description. General Compans rightly considered that a charge at the bayonet's point could not have such deadly effects, and gave the signal for the charge ; but in the midst of the clamour and the smoke it was not well understood, and galloping, therefore, to the head of the 57th, which was the regiment nearest to the redoubt, he conducted it himself with fixed bayonets against the grenadiers of Woronzoff and Mecklenburgh, whom it speedily drove back in disorder. The example thus set by the 57th was followed by the 61st, which was at its side ; and as the 25th and 111th had been equally successful on our left, the redoubt was outflanked by this double movement, and fell into our hands ; the Russian artillerymen being almost to a man slain on their pieces.

But the 111th having advanced too far to our left was suddenly charged by Douka's cuirassiers, and placed in some peril. It formed into a square and checked with a storm of musketry the charge of its brave assailants. A Spanish infantry regiment, (that of Joseph-Napoleon,) which belonged to the division Compans, courageously hastened to the succour of its comrades, but found that the 111th had been sufficient for its own defence, although it had lost the two small cannon belonging to the regiment, having being unable to carry them off when falling back to form in square.

This short but glorious struggle, in which we lost four or five thousand men and the Russians seven or eight thousand, having left us masters of the whole of the plain on the right of the Kalocza, Napoleon hastened to place his army in position there; intending that those troops only which had not yet arrived should remain on the left of the Kolocza. The position which during two days the Russians had occupied on the heights of Borodino, the defensive works which they had constructed, and the reports of prisoners, all concurred in showing that at length was to be fought that battle which the French desired, because they hoped that it would be the means of their obtaining some decisive triumph, and the Russians desired because they were ashamed of continually retreating, and weary of devastating their country. Believing, therefore, that there could be no doubt that this battle was at length about to take place, Napoleon determined to halt for a day, for the purpose of rallying the troops which had not yet come up, and of having time deliberately to reconnoitre the ground; and bivouacked his troops from right to left of the vast plain which they occupied.

On the morning of the following day, the 1st, the sun shone once more on thousands of helmets, bayonets, and pieces of cannon, on the heights of Borodino, and our army had the satisfaction of perceiving that the Russians were still in position, and evidently determined to fight. Napoleon, who had bivouacked on the left of the Kolocza, in the midst of his guard, proceeded at a very early hour, surrounded by his Marshals, to reconnoitre the ground on which he was about to measure his strength with the Russians.

After a most careful reconnaissance of the position occupied by the enemy, Napoleon was confirmed in the opinion he had formed at a single glance, that the left of this position being greatly escarped, and protected by the deep bed of the Kolocza, that the attack should be directed against its right, where the heights were less precipitous and defended by ravines without depth and without water. The great Moscow road which we had followed, passing at first along the left of the Kolocza, continued upon the right of this river to Borodino, and rising on the Gorki plateau traversed the chain of hills on its way to Mojaisk. This portion of the position, which was its centre, was as impregnable as that on the left, and it was only at some distance from Borodino and towards the right of the Kolocza that the ground presented any facilities for an attack. The first elevation on the right of the Borodino was covered with thick brushwood at its foot, and was terminated at its summit by a sort of tolerably large plateau, which was crowned by a redoubt the sides of which were prolonged



in curtains, and the embrasures of which were filled with twenty-one pieces of cannon of great calibre ; and which was to be named in the memorable battle, which was about to take place, the great redoubt. Still more to our right there was another elevation, separated from the first by a little ravine called the Séméneffskoié ravine, from a neighbouring village of that name, which, less large but steeper than the first, was surmounted by two rows of artillery and a third placed en retour and turned towards the ravine of Séméneffskoié. The village of Séméneffskoié, situated at the commencement of the ravine which separated the two elevations, and previously burned by the Russians, was surrounded by an elevation of earth and armed with cannon. Still more to the right were woods extending far into the distance and traversed by the old Moscow road, which rejoined the new road by the village of Outitza. It would have been possible to turn on this side the position of the Russians ; but the woods were dense and little known, and a movement of this sort would have rendered necessary a long detour.

Having concluded this inspection, Napoleon resolved to leave but a small portion of his forces on the left of the Kolocza, to execute a vigorous attack on the centre of the enemy's position, towards Borodino, by the new Moscow road, in order to draw off the enemy's attention, but to direct his principal effort towards the right of the Kolocza, against the two elevations, crowned by the great redoubt and three pieces of cannon ; and at the same time to advance across the woods, upon the old Moscow road, the corps of Prince Poniatowski, which had always formed the extreme right of the French army. His intention being to direct such a force upon this point as must cause the Russians serious alarm, and might perform even more effectual services should circumstances favour.

Whilst Napoleon was making these dispositions, Marshal Davoust, who had executed an accurate reconnaissance by plunging into the woods, and had thus become convinced of the possibility of turning the Russian position, offered to Napoleon to execute with his five divisions, the detour which would lead across the woods to the old Moscow road, and promised that, should he set out in the night, he would be at eight o'clock on the following morning on the Russian flank with forty thousand men, and attacking them in the centre drive them péle-mêle into the angle formed by the Kolocza with the Moscowa ; from which position, although the bed of the Kolocza was in several places dry, and the Moscowa was fordable, it would necessarily be extremely difficult for them to escape, and from which they certainly could not carry off a cannon.



The proposition was an enticing one, and the success it offered very probable, for the Russian position—which was almost impregnable toward its left and centre, and well defended on its left by the redoubts—could only be readily attacked towards its extreme left, by the woods of Outitza, which could not be considered impenetrable, since a man so exact as Marshal Davoust, was willing to engage to traverse them in the course of a single night. To Napoleon, however, it seemed that the detour would be too long, that it would have to be executed across woods extremely thick and obscure; that by the execution of such a movement the army would be separated during some hours into two parts at some distance from each other: that even, the success of such a manœuvre would have a very disadvantageous result, since the Russians on finding themselves turned, would very probably retreat and once more deprive us of the much desired opportunity of encountering them in battle; and that, moreover, the proposed manœuvre could be executed much nearer and with much less hazard, by passing between the redoubts and the extremities of the woods, with two or three of Marshal Davoust's divisions, risking in the depths of the woods only Prince Poniatowski's corps, and thus obtaining all the advantages of the proposed operation without any of its inconveniences.

Prince Eugene, who since the departure from Smolensk had always formed the left of the army, was alone directed to operate on the left of the Kolocza; and he, even, was instructed to act on this side with the smaller portion of his forces. He was ordered to leave his light cavalry and the Italian guard before that portion of the heights which their escarpment and the Kolocza rendered inaccessible, and to execute with the French division Delzons, a vigorous attack on Borodino, to gain possession of it, to cross the Kolocza bridge, but to refrain from executing any movements on the other side of the river, and to establish at Borodino itself a strong battery which should take in flank the great Russian redoubt. With the French division Broussier, and two of the divisions of Marshal Davoust, which were placed under his command for the day, and the divisions Morand and Gudin, he was to attack the great redoubt and to carry it at any cost. Marshal Ney, with the two French divisions Ledru and Razout, the Wurtemberg division Marchand, and Junot's Westphalians, was to attack in front the second elevation and the three lines of artillery which Marshal Davoust was ordered to attack in flank by the border of the wood, with the divisions Compans and Dessaix. Finally, Prince Poniatowski, thrown as a forlorn hope into the midst of the woods, was to endeavour to turn the

Russian position, debouching by the old Moscow road upon Outitza.

The three cavalry corps, Nansouty, Montbrun and Latour-Maubourg, were directed to take up positions, the first behind Marshal Davoust, the second behind Marshal Ney, and the third in reserve. The division Friant and the whole of the imperial guard were posted in the rear and in reserve, to be employed according as circumstances should render necessary. For the purpose of returning the fire of the Russian redoubts, Napoleon ordered the construction of the batteries covered with earthen epaulments, in front of the three lines of artillery, the great redoubt, and Borodino, and armed them with one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon. That the enemy might not become acquainted with the secret of his plan of attack, Napoleon determined to pass the 6th in the same position which he had occupied during the 5th, and to draw up his troops in order of battle on the 7th at day break. To facilitate communications between the two sides of the river Generals Eblé and Chasseloup had constructed upon the Kolocza five or six ponts de chevalets, which would afford a passage across the river at the principal points without the necessity of passing through its muddy and broken bed. The actual strength of the army was now about one hundred and twenty-seven thousand men, all of whom were animated with the utmost ardour and confidence, and it was provided with five hundred and eighty cannon.

The Russian army had, in the meantime, made preparations for an obstinate resistance, and had resolved not to yield up the position which it occupied until almost annihilated. General Kutusoff, who had received the title of Prince in reward for the services which he had recently rendered in Turkey, had General Benningsen for the chief of his staff, and Colonel Toll for his quarter-master general; the latter of whom for the most part not only executed but suggested his plan of operations. Barclay de Tolly and Bagration continued to command under his orders the armies of the Dwina and the Dnieper, respectively; and were equally resolved to die, should it be necessary, in support of the Russian arms; the one being inspired with indignation at the manner in which he had been treated, and the other by patriotic ardour and hatred of the French. All the officers were filled with a spirit of equal devotion; and, in fact, the Russian aristocracy was as much engaged in this war as the Russian state, and was ready to shed its blood to satisfy the passionate sentiments which governed it.

The Russians were drawn up in the following order;—  
On the extreme right, opposite our left, behind Borodino,

the point which was least exposed to attack, were posted the 2nd corps, Bagowouth's, and the 4th, Ostermann's, under the command of General Miloradovitch. Behind these were the 1st cavalry corps of General Ouvaroff, the second of General Korff, and a little farther to the extreme right, Platow's Cossacks, watching the banks of the Kolocza, as far as its junction with the Moskowa. The regiments of the foot chasseurs, of the guard, and Bagowouth's, and Ostermann's corps, guarded the Borodino. In the centre, was the 6th corps, General Doctoroff's, resting its right on the top of the Gorki plateau, behind Borodino, and its left on the great redoubt. Behind Doctoroff's corps was ranged the 3rd cavalry, under the orders of Baron de Kreutz, who replaced Count Pahlen, at this time ill. Here ended the line of the first army, and the command of General Barclay de Tolly.

In immediate succession to the first army was the second army under the command of Prince Bagration. The 7th corps, under Raefskoi, rested its right on the great redoubt, its left on the ruins of the village of Séméneffskoié. The 8th, under Borosdin, had its right bent back, on account of the curve of the Russian line around Séméneffskoié, and its left established near the three lines of artillery which were guarded by the 27th division, under Névérofskoi, placed, for this day, under the orders of Prince Gortschakoff, together with the 4th cavalry corps of General Siewers. Numerous battalions of foot chasseurs filled the thickets and the wood. The militia, which had recently arrived from Moscow, together with some Cossacks, was posted at Outitza. Finally, at some distance behind the centre, in the environs of Psarewo, was placed the reserve, consisting of the guard, the 3rd corps, Touczkoff's, and an immense artillery of heavy calibre.

The Russian army consisted altogether of about one hundred and forty thousand men, of whom one hundred and twenty thousand were regular troops, the remainder being Cossacks and Moscow militia. The principal body of the Russian force was on their right, opposite our left, and the best portion on their left, opposite our right, the part of their line against which Napoleon had resolved to make his principal effort; and although Napoleon had not divulged his designs, the proceedings he had already taken had sufficiently served to point out to the Russians the danger which threatened their left, towards Séméneffskoié, the three lines of artillery and the Outitza wood. But when representations to this effect were made to Kutusof, who, as has been already remarked, was more fit to conduct a campaign, than to fight a great battle, he failed to perceive their force, and obstinately retained the corps of



Ostermann and Bagowouth in the positions they then occupied, because he still saw the bulk of the French army on the new Moscow road, and only detached the 3rd corps from the reserve to post it at Outitza. These were the sole arrangements he had made for the battle; but the energy of his army, the firmness of Barclay de Tolly, and the patriotic courage of Bagration, were well calculated to supply the place of what he had left undone.

By a species of mutual consent the 6th had been allowed to pass by without even the discharge of a musket. It was the portentous calm which precedes great tempests. The French troops passed the day in repose, indulging in their bivouacs in the cheerful discourse so usual with French soldiers, who are, perhaps, the gayest and the bravest of any in the world. None of them doubted they were about to obtain a great victory, and to enter Moscow under their invincible and fortunate General. The love of glory was the passion with which their souls were fired.

Feelings of a very different tone filled the hearts of the Russians. Gloomy, exasperated, resolved to fight to the death, having no hope but in God, they were on their knees in the midst of a thousand flambeaux, before a miraculous image of the Madonna of Smolensk, saved, it was said, on the wings of angels from the conflagration of that unfortunate city, and now carried in procession by the Greek Priests through the bivouacs of the camp of Borodino, whilst old General Kutusof, who, so far from believing in the miraculous image, believed scarcely in God, so manifest in the Universe, uncovered, and with eyes bent to the ground, accompanied the procession in the midst of his staff.

In the meantime, Napoleon under his tent completed his arrangements, and heard with a singular mixture of raillery and humour, the account given him of the battle of Salamanca by Colonel Fabvier, who had just arrived. When the Colonel had concluded his account he dismissed him, saying that he would repair on the morrow on the banks of the Moskowa the faults committed at Arapiles. M. de Bossuet, prefect of the palace, also arrived at the camp on this day, bringing the portrait of the King of Rome, painted by the famous artist, Gerard. Napoleon gazed for a moment with emotion at his son's likeness, then had it replaced in its case, cast a final glance on the enemy's position to assure himself that the Russians had no intention to retreat, perceived with the utmost satisfaction that their camp displayed no signs of the adoption of such a measure, and then entered his tent to take a brief repose.

An absolute calm, a profound silence reigned over the plain



which was on the morrow to be the theatre of a scene the most horrible and stupendous. The laughter of the French troops, and the pious hymns of the Russians had at length given place to the stillness of slumber. On each side the soldiers slept around huge fires, which had been lighted to protect them from the chill of the night and the damp arising from a shower of small rain, which had fallen during the evening.

At three o'clock in the morning the French troops began to take their arms, and to take advantage of the mist to pass over to the right of the Kolocza, and to assume their appointed stations; Prince Eugene opposite Borodino and the great redoubt, Ney and Davoust in front of the second hill, the cavalry behind them, Friant and the guard in reserve in the centre. Poniatowski far upon the right, crossing the wood. Whilst our troops were taking up these positions in silence, so as not to attract the attention of the enemy, the artillerymen of the great batteries, with which it was intended to meet the fire of the Russian works, were at their guns waiting Napoleon's signal to open fire. Napoleon himself had taken up a position at a very early hour in the morning at the Schwardino redoubt, at a point where he would be able to observe all that took place, and at the same time be in some degree sheltered from the Russian bullets. Murat, glowing with ardour and embroidery, wearing a tunic of green velvet, a plumed cap, and yellow boots, and presenting an object for ridicule, did not his heroism forbid it, galloped in front of his cavalry, radiant with confidence and inspiring his troops with the same spirit by means of his martial bearing. Clouds obscured the heavens, and the sun, rising opposite to us and beyond the Russian lines, announced its approach only by a ruddy line along the horizon, but speedily displaying its whole disc as a ball of red hot iron, Napoleon, who watched it rise in the midst of his lieutenants, exclaimed—"Behold the sun of Austerlitz!" Alas! yes! But veiled in clouds!

Napoleon had prepared a short and energetic proclamation, to be addressed to the soldiers at the moment previous to the commencement of the battle; and the captains of each company, the commanders of each squadron, forming their troops into a semi-circle, read out to them in a loud voice these words of their Emperor, which were enthusiastically received.

This address having been read, and the troops having taken up their respective positions, about half-past five o'clock the report of a cannon on the right was the signal, at which the most terrible uproar succeeded the previous

unbroken stillness, and a long trail of fire and smoke instantly pourtrayed in fearful outlines the positions of the opposed armies. Whilst one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon directed their fire against the Russian works, whilst Davoust and Ney on the right advanced with their infantry, Prince Eugene had sent the divisions Morand and Gudin across the Kolocza against the great redoubt, leaving the division Broussier on the bank of this little river in reserve, and with the division Delzons advancing towards Borodino, where the Kolocza turned to the left, and covered the Russian right up to its junction with the Moscowa; the intention being that Prince Eugene should commence the action by attacking Borodino, in order to persuade the enemy that we were desirous of debouching by the great Moscow road, called the New Road.

Prince Eugene advanced, therefore, with the division Delzons upon the village of Borodino, which was defended by three battalions of chasseurs of the Imperial Russian Guard. General Plauzonne, at the head of the 106th of the line, penetrated into the interior of the village, whilst the other regiments of the division pressed forward on the right and left. The 106th drove the Russians out of the village, drove them beyond it, and following with the utmost vigour crossed the Kolocza in spite of the instructions of Napoleon, who had desired only to feign and not in reality to debouch, by the great Moscow road. Two regiments of Russian chasseurs, the 19th and 20th, which were posted at this point, opened a terrible fire on the companies of the 106th which had crossed the river, and completely overwhelmed them, taking or slaying all the men who had not time to fly. The brave General Plauzonne himself received a mortal wound. But the 92nd hearing the perilous position of the 106th, hastened to its aid, rallied it, and established it firmly in possession of Borodino; a position which remained in our hands throughout the battle.

This first portion of Napoleon's plan having been thus executed, Prince Eugene was to await the capture by Davoust and Ney, of the three lines of artillery which covered the Russian left, upon which he was to attack, with divisions Morand and Gudin, the great redoubt of the centre.

Marshal Davoust, in fact, preceded by thirty pieces of cannon, had advanced at the head of the divisions Compans and Dessaix along the wood, the depths of which were being traversed by the troops under Poniatowski. He had approached that one of the three lines of artillery which was most to the right, and had formed the division into columns of attack, leaving the division Dessaix in reserve for the purpose of

guarding his right flank and his rear. Scarcely had the division Compans found itself within reach of the enemy than it was suddenly overwhelmed by a terrific fire from the three lines of artillery and the lines of Woronzoff's grenadiers. Its brave general and almost all its officers were struck down, and although still undaunted, its troops paused for a moment from want of leaders. The Marshal perceived their indecision, and learning its cause, hastened up to replace General Compans, and threw the 67th on the right *flèche*. This regiment entered with fixed bayonets and slew the Russian artillerymen at their guns, but at the same moment a bullet struck Marshal Davoust's horse, inflicting a severe contusion on the Marshal himself and depriving him of consciousness.

As soon as he was informed of this circumstance, Napoleon sent an order of immediate attack to Marshal Ney; at the same time despatching Murat to replace Marshal Davoust, and his aide-de-camp Kopp to take the place of General Compans. Murat—who was of a most excellent disposition—hastened to the assistance of the Marshal who was his enemy, but found the latter somewhat recovered, and persisting, in spite of frightful sufferings, in remaining at the head of his soldiers; information of which Murat instantly sent to Napoleon, who received it with the utmost satisfaction. At the same moment Ney, with the division Ledru in front, the Wurtemberg division in the rear, and the division Razout on the left, advanced upon the right *flèche*, possession of which had been obtained by the 57th, and which was with difficulty held by that regiment against Woronzoff's grenadiers. Ney himself entered the position at the head of 24th *léger*, and audacious and invulnerable, threw himself into the midst of the *mêlée* as though he had been a captain of grenadiers. At the same moment, Névéroffskoi came up with his brave division to the assistance of Woronzoff's grenadiers, and the united troops threw themselves together upon the disputed work; but Ney, advancing the division Marchand, and debouching with it right and left, succeeded in repulsing them, and at the same time sent the division Razout against the *flèche* on the right.

At the commencement of the battle, Prince Bagration, who was opposed to the two Marshals, Ney and Davoust, perceiving that he was threatened by formidable forces, had withdrawn some battalions from the 7th corps, which was posted between Séménoffskoié and the great redoubt, had advanced the Mecklenburg grenadiers, the Douka cuirassiers, and the 4th regiment of Siewer's cavalry, and sent for the division Konownitsyn which formed a portion of Touczkoff's which was directed upon Outitza. At the same time he



had immediately sent information of what was taking place on his side to Kutusof, for the purpose of warning the Commander-in-Chief to send him reinforcements.

The disputed works themselves were too narrow to serve as battle fields and the combat was fought on the right, the left, and in front. Ney occupied the line of artillery to the right with the divisions Ledru and Compans, and being unable to support the line of artillery to the left, which had been captured by the division Razout, the troops of the latter had been driven out by the reinforced Russian troops, when, fortunately, Murat, who had been sent to this point by Napoleon for the purpose of determining the proper moment at which the cavalry should take part in the action, galloped up, followed by the light cavalry of General Bruyère. At the sight of our soldiers in retreat and almost routed, he flung himself from his horse, rallied them, and led them forward, directed a close and destructive fire upon the enemy and then, having first cleared the ground with Bruyère's light cavalry, entered the work, sword in hand, at the head of Razout's soldiers, who slew the Russian artillerymen at their guns and permanently established themselves in the position. In the meantime Ney, who had at his disposal only the light Wurtemberg cavalry of General Beurman, threw it upon the lines of Névéroffskoi and Woronzoff and compelled them to fall back.

By means of these vigorous measures our troops succeeded in retrieving their position on these two points. Murat, assuming in concert with Ney the direction of the battle on this side, ordered General Nansouty to climb the slopes covered with brushwood and to take up a position on the right of the works which we had just carried; for there was beyond a sort of plain slightly inclined towards the Russians, on which the cavalry could be of great service. As Davoust, in spite of his determination to remain in the midst of the battle, was unable to lead them, Ney took the command of the divisions Compans and Dessaix, and adding to them the Westphalians, who were behind, endeavoured to support Prince Poniatowski, whose artillery was now crossing the Outitza wood.

Our troops thus gained ground by extending themselves to the right; and being masters of the heights they had the advantage of being able to direct against the Russians a plunging fire. The Russians replied by a fire which was less well directed but very vigorous, and the cannonade on this point speedily became tremendous; whilst Ney on the right, and Murat on the left, continuing their movement in advance, approached the Séménéffskoié ravine, and passed the third line of artillery which formed the *retour en arrière*, and



naturally, therefore, fell into our hands. But in this position they found themselves suddenly exposed to the enemy's fire from the Séméneffskoié village, and to that of the Raëffskoi corps which occupied the other side of the ravine, and extended from Séméneffskoié village to the great redoubt.

Murat's troops suffered considerable loss from the enemy's fire in this quarter, and their commander, having no infantry at his disposal, and perceiving that the Séméneffskoié ravine was in this direction but of slight depth, ordered Latour-Maubourg to cross it with his cavalry, to charge the Russian infantry, to take possession of its cannon, and then to return should their position be found untenable. And to assist this perilous manœuvre he collected all the artillery usually attached to the cavalry, and arranged it along the brink of the river in such a manner as to cover the advance of our squadrons with his fire.

Latour-Maubourg, in obedience to Murat's signal, descended with the Saxon and Westphalian cuirassiers into the ravine, ascended the opposite side, attacked the Russian infantry, broke two of its squares, and forced it to fall back; but having achieved this success was forced to retreat from a position in which he would be exposed without support to the attack of the whole Russian army.

Whilst these events were taking place on the right in advance of the three flèches, Prince Eugene on the left, having very early carried the two divisions Morand and Gudin across the Kolocza, had subsequently directed the division Morand against the great redoubt, and left the division Gudin at the foot of the work, with the object of husbanding his resources. The division Morand had ascended the elevated ground on which the great redoubt was constructed, and had supported with admirable coolness the fire of eighty pieces of cannon, and when, advancing through a cloud of smoke, it had arrived close to the redoubt itself, General Bonamy, at the head of the 30th of the line, had thrown himself upon it, and driven out the Russians at the point of the bayonet. The whole division had then, debouching to the right and left, repulsed the division Paskewitch of Raëffskoi's corps, which had thus found itself driven back on the one side by Morand's infantry, and on the other by the cuirassiers of Latour-Maubourg.

At this moment the battle might have been gained with immense results, although it was scarcely ten o'clock in the morning, had we directed a vigorous effort against the Séméneffskoié village, passing in force the ravine which had been crossed by Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, and which

Raëffskoi's broken corps was quite incapable of defending, penetrating the enemy's line with a torrent of troops, advancing to Gorki, behind Borodino, and thus enclosing the centre and the right of the Russian army in the angle formed by the Kolocza and Moscowa. But although Murat and Ney, occupying positions on the brink of the Séménéffskoié ravine, burned with impatience to snatch the advantages which they perceived might be obtained within a single half hour, this half hour was allowed to slip by unused; for unfortunately Napoleon was at Schwardino, where he was able to obtain the best view of the progress of the battle. Murat and Ney sent General Belliard to him with a request for all the reinforcements he could possibly afford them, and declaring that if left free to act, they would obtain a greater triumph for him than any he had hitherto reaped. But Napoleon, oppressed with a severe cold, was less sanguine than his lieutenants, less certain that the victory might be easily gained, and considered that to make use of his reserves at ten o'clock in the morning would be very premature. He sent towards Séménéffskoié, however, the division Friant, which was the only reserve remaining at his disposal, with the exception of the guard.

In the meantime Kutusof, who was at table a little in the rear of the field of battle whilst Barclay and Bagration were exposing themselves in the midst of the most deadly fire, was on his side besieged with the most urgent requests that he would fill up with his reserves the gap made in the Russian line; and in compliance with reiterated demands had detached from the guard, which was posted at Psarewo, the regiments of Lithuania and Ismailow, the Astrakan cuirassiers, those of the Empress and Emperor, together with a strong reserve of artillery, and had sent them towards Séménéffskoié. He had also determined to withdraw Bago-wouth's corps from the extreme right, and had advanced one of the two divisions of which it was composed, that commanded by Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, towards Séménéffskoié, and the other commanded by Olsoufié, towards Outitza, for the purpose of aiding Touczkoff to resist the attack of Prince Poniatowski. And, finally, in compliance with the solicitations of Platow and Ouvaroff, who, posted at the extreme right of the Russian army, on the heights protected by the Kolocza, perceived our left to be much weakened, and were anxious to take advantage of the fact, he had given them permission to cross the Kolocza with their cavalry, and to make a diversion which could scarcely fail of having considerable effect, since it would be altogether unexpected by the French.

In the meantime, Barclay and Bagration had resolved to recover at any price the great redoubt and the three *flèches*; and Barclay, at the same moment Yermaloff, the chief of his staff, and the young Kutuaisoff, commander of his artillery, had hastened up to rally Raeffskoi's broken corps, and borrowing from Doctoroff, who was posted in the neighbourhood, the division Likatcheff, had marched upon the great redoubt which had fallen into the hands of Morand's division, whose General had unfortunately been severely wounded, and which now found itself almost without guidance. The 30th of the line occupied the redoubt, and was deprived of the support of the two other regiments of the division which had been left on the right and left and much too far in the rear. At the same time, the division Gudin was in a ravine on the right, the division Broussier on the left on the back of the Kolocza, and equally inactive by the error of Prince Eugene, who had neither the experience nor the zealous energy necessary in decisive moments. Seeing this state of affairs, therefore, Yermaloff and Kutaisoff marched at the head of the Ouja regiment and Raeffskoi's infantry, and advancing upon the 30th, overwhelmed it by force of numbers. At the same moment, they attacked with cavalry the two other regiments of Morand's division posted on each side of the great redoubt and were about to drive them to the foot of the elevated ground when Prince Eugene, arriving at the head of Gudin's division, checked their advance, and compelled them to be content with the capture of the great redoubt.

In the meantime, Barclay having hastened up with Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, had found the redoubt retaken, and posted the Prince between the redoubt and the Séménéffskoié village to fill up the void left by the almost totally destroyed corps of Raeffskoi, and then calmly remained in a position upon which the French were pouring the most destructive fire, feeling a sort of pleasure in thus nobly disproving the despicable calumnies of his ungrateful countrymen.

Bagration, on his side, having received the Konownitsyn division detached from Touczkoff's corps, together with the foot and cavalry regiments of the guard, had sworn to die or to recover the three *flèches* situated on his left and our right. He had to encounter the troops under Murat and Ney, who had Latour-Maubourg and Friant on their left; the divisions Razout, Ledru, and Marchand in the centre; and on the right the divisions Compans and Dessaix, the Nansouty cuirassiers and the Westphalian infantry; and the combat in this quarter speedily became one of the most terrible



description, exceeding in fury any combats our troops had ever beheld, until at length, desiring to terminate the battle on this point, Murat and Ney ordered a great movement of cavalry, which was accordingly made by the Saint Germain and Valence cuirassiers on the right, and by those of Generals Vathier and Defrance on the left, a portion of the Russian cavalry was broken, but the other, consisting of the Lithuanian and Ismailow regiments resisted the shock, and the mêlée became murderous, the victims being as numerous as illustrious. Montbrun, the heroic Montbrun, the most brilliant of our cavalry officers, fell, slain by a bullet. Rapp, who commanded the division Compans, received five wounds; and General Dessaix, who left his own troops for the purpose of replacing him, was struck down in his turn. There remained only Generals of brigade to take the command of divisions. But in the midst of this carnage Murat and Ney, always in front and under the heaviest fire, continued, as though they had been invulnerable, untouched. A man of rare excellence, Friant, the model of all warlike virtues, the only one of the old chiefs of Davoust's corps who had not been touched, for Davoust himself had been placed hors de combat, Morand was dangerously wounded, and Gudin died at Valoutina, was at length struck down in his turn, and carried to the same ambulance at which lay his own son. The command of his division devolved upon a young Dutchman, General Vandedem, a courageous man but wanting in experience, and who was eager, therefore, to resign this honour to Galichet the chief of the staff. Murat came up at the moment when the latter had assumed the command, and whilst they were speaking together, a bullet passed between them interrupting the discourse—"Not a very safe position this," said Murat, smiling. "But we will remain in it, nevertheless," replied the intrepid Galichet. At the same moment the Russian cuirassiers poured down en masse, and the division had scarcely time to form into two squares connected by a line of artillery. Murat took the command of one of them and Galichet of the other, and during a quarter of an hour they received, with the most imperturbable sang froid the furious charges of the Russian cavalry! "Soldiers of Friant," cried Murat, "you are heroes!" "vive Murat! vive the King of Naples!" replied the soldiers.

It was thus that we occupied, in default of possessing more forces, this portion of the field of battle which extended from Séménoffskoié to the Outitza wood. Suddenly an illustrious victim fell on the side of the Russians. Bagration was mortally wounded, and carried off the field amidst cries of grief from his troops, with whom he was almost an object



of idolatry. Raeffskoi was summoned to take the command of the second Russian army, which was now without a leader, but he could not quit the remnant of the 7th corps, which continued to occupy, together with Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, the interval between the grand redoubt and Séménoffskoié; and General Doctoroff was then summoned to replace Bagration.

At this same moment the Russians became aware that Poniatowski, after having traversed the wood, had seized the heights of Outitza from Touczkoff, who had been deprived of the division Konownitsyn, without having been joined as yet by that of Olsoufief; and that Touczkoff, the eldest of the three brothers, had been killed. In the anxiety caused by this information, and in answer to importunate demands for it, the division of Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg had been immediately despatched from the position which it had hitherto occupied, under a terrible fire of artillery, in the space between Séménoffskoié and the great redoubt. And this important space, therefore, which the Russians had made such desperate endeavours to hold against us, was now almost open before us. By directing the whole of the Imperial guard upon this point, we might have penetrated to the centre of the Russian army.

Ney and Murat sent to propose, for the second time, this manœuvre to Napoleon, who, finding the state of the battle ripe for such a measure, assented to their representations, and gave the preliminary orders for its execution. He ordered the advance of the division Claparède and the young guard, and, quitting Schwardino, placed himself at their head. But suddenly a terrible tumult arose on the left of the army, beyond the Kolocza, and our troops displayed in that direction all the signs of having been routed. At this sight Napoleon checked the advance of the guard, and galloping up to learn what had taken place, after some time discovered that the cavalry of Platow and Ouvaroff had crossed the Kolocza on our weakened left, and whilst Platow attacked our baggage, Ouvaroff had fallen upon the division Delzons. Unable to obtain accurate information with respect to what had taken place in this direction, and being unwilling to deprive himself entirely of his reserve, Napoleon sent to Ney and Murat all that remained of the artillery of the guard, advanced the division Claparède, so that it might be ready to take a direction either to the right towards Séménéffskoié, or to the left towards Borodino, and awaited himself, at the head of the infantry of the guard, the progress of events on the left of the Kolocza.

At the first moment of this sudden irruption of the enemy,

the Viceroy had left the centre, and, passing to the left bank of the Kolocza, had advanced with the utmost speed to Borodino, where he found his regiments already formed into square, and stedfastly awaiting the enemy's charge. At the sight of the numerous Russian squadrons, the light cavalry of General Ornano, too weak to resist Ouvaroff's eight regiments of regular cavalry, successively fell back in good order upon our infantry, from before which, after various useless evolutions, which cost them many of their men, the Russian cavalry retired across the Kolocza.

Vain as this attempt on the part of the enemy had been, it nevertheless had cost us more than an hour, had interrupted the movement of the guard, and afforded time to Kutusof, who at length perceived the necessity of the measure, to move Ostermann's corps to the centre from his right, where it had been uselessly posted opposite our left. The Russian General had now, moreover, moved the whole Russian imperial guard to close the Séméneffskoié gap in his line, and upon forcing this gap in the enemy's line thus again filled up, Ney and Murat had not refrained from scornful remarks on the absent Emperor, who was occupied with cares of which they were ignorant.

Napoleon, who had sent Marshal Bessières to Murat and Ney, and who learned from him that the Russian centre was again reinforced, and that the measures proposed by Ney and Murat were no longer capable of execution (Bessières pretended that they never had been), now ordered Prince Eugene to do the only thing which appeared to him at the moment calculated to terminate the struggle, and which was to seize the great redoubt of the centre. At the same time he ordered Murat, who had at his disposal an immense quantity of artillery, to overwhelm with grape the strong columns of the enemy which were advancing, and to be prepared to charge with his cavalry at the decisive moment.

And this decisive moment was now, at length, at hand. On the one side Murat had ranged upon his left, along the Séméneffskoié ravine, the mass of artillery at his disposal, and behind it the three cavalry corps of Generals Montbrun, Latour-Maubourg and Grouchy, awaiting the order to pass the ravine and to charge the lines of the Russian infantry. On the other side Prince Eugene, concentrating on the right of the great redoubt the division Morand and Gudin, had moved upon its left the division Broussier, which was entirely fresh and eager to signalize itself in its turn. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the terrible conflict of the opposed armies had lasted about nine hours. Murat and Ney hurled the fire of two hundred pieces of

cannon against the Russian centre. The whole of Doctroff's corps had been sent behind the redoubt, and although it suffered much, suffered less than Ostermann's corps, which had been posted uncovered between the redoubt itself and Séménéffskoié. Considering, at length, that the enemy's line had been sufficiently shattered by our cannon, Murat determined to renew those cavalry charges which had so well succeeded in the morning under Latour-Maubourg. He gave the signal, and Coulaincourt, at the head of the 2nd cavalry corps, passing the ravine debouched beyond it, and having overwhelmed, with the assistance of General Defrance, who had followed him with two regiments of carabiniers, some remains of Raeffskoi's corps which were still upon this part of the field, together with the cavalry of Korff and the Baron de Kreutz, he passed the great redoubt at full gallop, and then perceiving behind him Likatcheff's infantry which guarded the great redoubt, he fell upon it by a sudden movement to the left and sabred it at the head of the 5th cuirassiers; when, unhappily, he was struck dead. In the meantime Prince Eugene, who was on the left, put himself at the head of the 9th of the line, and having addressed them in a few animated words, rushed with them up the elevation, took advantage of the tumult of the combat and the denseness of the smoke to escalate the parapets of the redoubt and crossed them at the moment when the 5th cuirassiers were sabring the infantry of the division Likatcheff. Throwing themselves upon the division with fixed bayonets they took some and slew a large number of its troops, and then proceeded to take part in the desperate cavalry combat which was being waged between the Russian horse guards and our cuirassiers, and which resulted in the former being forced to retreat behind their infantry.

In the meantime, posted as it was in advance of the great redoubt, the 9th suffered cruelly; and at length the divisions Morand and Gudin which remained on the right, afforded it their support advancing beyond the redoubt whilst Murat and Ney, forming an angle with them, gradually gained ground, and passed the Séménéffskoié ravine, carrying forward their right. Our whole army thus occupied a position in which it enveloped in an angle of fire the Russian army, now terribly thinned, and the troops of the latter slowly retired upon the border of the Psarewo wood, where they supported with the utmost firmness the concentrated fire of three hundred pieces of cannon which the French directed against them, whilst awaiting the execution of the decisive movement.

At this period the victory was certainly in our hands, for



we had entire possession of the field of battle. On the extreme right, beyond the wood, Prince Poniatowski, after a desperate contest, had succeeded in establishing himself beyond Outitza, on the old Moscow road. On the extreme left, Delzons had uninterrupted possession of Borodino, and at the essential point, namely, between the two elevations which had fallen into our hands the Russian army was held in check, driven back upon the border of the wood, and falling before the fire of three hundred cannon. There still remained, however, three hours of daylight, and although we had no longer an opportunity such as had been twice offered to us during the day, of executing a decisive manœuvre, we might still, by attacking the Russian army a last time, advancing the right reinforced with a mass of fresh troops, have driven back the Russian army towards the Moscowa, and inflicted upon it a blow sufficiently terrible, probably, to overcome Alexander's already wavering constancy. But the execution of such a measure as this would have required the whole of the Imperial guard, which numbered eighteen thousand men, infantry and cavalry, who had not yet been engaged. There remained on the left, in the division Delzons; at the centre, in the divisions Broussier, Morand, and Gudin; and on the right, in the division Dessaix, troops which, although they had already taken part in the battle, were still quite capable of taking part in any great decisive movement. And now, Napoleon, whom the height of the sun above the horizon urged to decisive action as much as the urgent instances of his lieutenants, mounted his horse to make a personal inspection of the field of battle. A severe cold from which he suffered at the time was a source of great annoyance to him, but was not of a nature to paralyse his powerful intellect. At the same time, the horrors of this terrible battle, which was unexampled even in his experience, had in some degree shaken him. Almost every instant of the day had brought him information of the fall of some one or other of his principal officers, Plausonne, Montbrun, Coulaincourt, Romeuf, Chastel, Lambert, Compère, Bessières, Dumas, Canouville, were slain; Marshal Davoust, Generals Morand, Friant, Compans, Rapp, Belliard, Nansouty, Grouchy, Saint-Germain, Bruyère, Pajol, Defrance, Bonamy, Teste, and Guillemminot, had fallen severely wounded. The determined manner, moreover, in which the Russians had fought, although not unexpected, had been such as could not fail to inspire serious reflections, for, to the honour of human nature be it said, there is something in the fierce spirit of patriotism even when vanquished which in some degree awes the boldest aggressor. And



thus Napoleon, as he surveyed the enemy's lines, remained in a state of irresolution, which was so unusual to him that those who were about him accounted for it by declaring that it resulted from ill-health. Galloping along the line of positions which had been seized by his troops, he beheld the Russians, drawn back, indeed, but remaining firm in solid masses; and although their position was such that a final shock directed against them obliquely, might have thrown them into disorder in the direction of the Moscowa, he could not be quite certain that despair might not be able to triumph even over the eighteen thousand men of his guard; and to neglect at that distance from his base of operations, to preserve unbroken the sole corps which remained to him intact, appeared to him a species of rashness from which no advantages could result equivalent to its manifest dangers. Turning to his principal officers, he said, "I will not destroy my guard. At a distance of eight hundred leagues from France, it would be scarcely wise to risk our last remaining reserve." And doubtless he was right; but in justifying this resolution he condemned, in fact, his attempt to carry on such a war, and for the second or third time since the passage of the Niemen, expiated, by an excess of prudence which was unusual with him, the error of his rashness. Passing the great Moscow road, and approaching Borodino, Gorki's troops became visible in the only advanced position which still remained in the hands of the Russians. And Napoleon considered for a moment whether he should carry it, but determined in the negative, as the result could not be worth its cost.

At the bottom of the field of battle the Russians, drawn up in close masses, presented a wide mark for our cannon, and seemed to defy us. "Since they are still anxious for it," said Napoleon, with the cruel jocosity of the battle field, "let them have it!" And during many hours the Russian masses persisted in remaining in line under the fire of nearly four hundred cannon directed against them by the French, who on their side suffered losses, but certainly not a sixth part so great as those which they inflicted.

At length the sun sank on this terrible scene which is without a parallel in the annals of humanity. The cannonade gradually subsided, and the opposed forces thoroughly exhausted, permitted themselves to indulge in some repose. Our Generals withdrew their divisions far enough to be out of reach of the enemy's fire, and posted at the foot of the heights which had fallen into our hands, being perfectly convinced that the Russians would not attempt to recapture them. Napoleon victorious, entered his tent in the midst of his

lieutenants, some of whom were full of discontent at what he had left undone, whilst the others declared that he had been wise to remain satisfied with the result which he had obtained; that the Russians were, in fact, destroyed, and the gates of Moscow were open to the French army. But none of that manifestation of joy and admiration which had burst forth at Austerlitz, at Jena, and at Friedland, were heard this evening in the conqueror's tent.

That night the French and Russian armies slept side by side on the battle field, and at day break awoke to a horrible scene, which sufficiently manifested the terrible sacrifice of human life which had taken place on the previous day. Ninety thousand men, a number of human beings equivalent to the population of a great city, covered the battle field dead or wounded. From fifteen to twenty thousand horses stretched on the ground or wandering about, uttering the most frightful cries, from three to four hundred gun carriages, and an infinite amount of every species of ruin, completed a spectacle which smote the heart, especially in the neighbourhood of the ravines, whither a species of instinct had led the wounded to seek shelter from fresh wounds. And there they lay in heaps without distinction of nation.

Happily—if, indeed the spirit of patriotism permits us to make use of an expression which is in this case almost inhuman—happily, our share in this mournful spectacle was less than that of the enemy, for whilst we had about nine or ten thousand killed, and about twenty or twenty-one thousand wounded, altogether thirty thousand men placed hors de combat, the loss of the Russians amounted, according to their own admission, to no less than sixty thousand. In this battle we had taken lives, where, in former battles, by skilful manœuvres, we had taken prisoners. Amongst our losses, and the numbers would appear incredible were they not attested by authentic documents, were forty-seven generals and thirty-seven colonels, killed or wounded, and the Russians had lost about as many. A convincing proof of the energy displayed by the leaders on either side, and of the close quarters at which the troops had fought. After this frightful duel our army numbered, taking into account the Italian division Pino, and the division Delaborde of the young guard, which arrived after the battle, about one hundred thousand men; whilst the Russians, on their side, could not have placed in line as many as fifty thousand. But they were in their own country, and we were eight hundred leagues from ours! They were engaged in a war to which they had been forced, and we were engaged in a war into which we had been

plunged by a spirit of ambition. And at every step we made in advance, when the giddiness of Fortune left no room for reflection, we blamed in our inmost hearts the chief whose dazzling fortunes we were following.

Kutusof, as complete a liar as he was a Russian, finding that his army was not to be wholly destroyed, had the audacity to write to his master, declaring that he had resisted during a whole day the assaults of the French army; that he had slain as many of his foes as he had lost of his own troops, and that if he retired from the field of battle, it was not because he was beaten, but because he desired to make the first movement, for the purpose of covering Moscow. He knew more perfectly than any other man in the world, how far to lie to flatter human passions, and especially the passions of an unenlightened people, and whilst, therefore, he refrained from declaring that he had been victorious, he dared to write almost equivalent falsehoods. He sent word to Count Rostopchin, who was destined speedily to obtain a terrible immortality, that he had fought a bloody battle in defence of Moscow, that he was far from having lost it, that he was about to fight others, that he could promise that the enemy should not enter the sacred city, but that it was absolutely necessary that he, Rostopchin, should furnish him with all the men capable of bearing arms, especially the Moscow militia which had been promised to him, to the amount of eighty thousand men, but of whom he had only received fifteen thousand. On the morning of the 8th of September he gave the order for the retreat of his army, directing that Mojaïsk should be disputed sufficiently long for the removal of the provisions, munitions, and such of the wounded as could bear it; and entrusting the command of his rear-guard to General Miloradovitch.

Napoleon, who had not the same reasons for making use of dissimulation, since he was decidedly victorious, was nevertheless in some degree embarrassed with respect to the terms in which he should describe his triumph. He had formerly been able to announce, in return for the loss of some thousands of his troops, the capture of thirty or forty thousand prisoners, some hundreds of cannon, and flags. But on this occasion he had taken neither prisoners, flags, nor cannon, (with the exception of a small number of pieces of artillery found in the redoubts). At the same time sixty thousand of the enemy lay dead or dying upon the battle field. . . . . Selecting in accordance with his custom, a name for this battle, which the Russians called the battle of Borodino, calculated to touch the imagination, he styled it the battle of the Moskowa, from the river of that name flowing at about

a league's distance from the battle field, and traversing Moscow in its course.

Anxious to reap the fruits of his victory Napoleon directed Murat upon Mojaïsk with two divisions of cuirassiers, several divisions of light cavalry, and one of the infantry divisions of Marshal Davoust, who followed with his four other divisions, being himself conveyed in a carriage, as he was unable to maintain his seat on his horse. At the same time Prince Poniatowski was directed, as he had been during the whole march, upon the right of the grand route, by the Wereja road, and Prince Eugene upon the left by the Rouza road. Napoleon himself with Ney's corps and the guard remained one day longer on the field of battle, for the purpose of executing the measures demanded alike by humanity and the interests of the army. And the first of these was the conversion of the Kolotskoi Abbey into a hospital for such of the wounded as were too ill to be transported any distance; it being arranged that the others should be conveyed to Mojaïsk as soon as it should be in our hands. For the cure of the horses and the repair of the cannon, which were but slightly injured, Napoleon established a cavalry and artillery dépôt in the villages surrounding the Kolotskoi Abbey, and determined that Junot with the Westphalians should remain in this position to guard and to procure for the unhappy wounded soldiers the provisions they were unable to obtain for themselves.

Having taken these first and indispensable measures, Napoleon sent orders to Smolensk for the immediate dispatch of an immense fresh supply of ammunition, and ordered a new movement in advance to be made by all the French or allied corps which remained at the various stations of Smolensk, Minsk, Wilna, Kowno, and Kœnigsberg.

The army had continued, in the meantime, its forward movement, and Murat had arrived on the evening of the 8th in front of Mojaïsk, a town of some importance, which the French were anxious to capture undestroyed. As they drew nearer Moscow the country appeared to increase in richness, but also displayed signs of a more determined destruction on the part of the enemy. There were at the same time more flourishing villages, and more columns of flame. The Russians, for the purpose of securing time to effect the removal of certain portions of their wounded and matériel, had posted in advance of a marshy ravine, a strong rear-guard of infantry and cavalry, and resolved to defend the position against the French troops. The position might have been turned, but as our forces failed to perceive, on account of the darkness of the night, the point at which



they might have succeeded, it was resolved to avoid the confusion of a midnight encounter with the enemy, and to bivouac within cannon range of the Russians.

On the following day the French forced their way into Mojaïsk, where they found some wounded Russians, whom they consigned to the care of their surgeons, and also provisions and buildings for a second hospital, which was a fortunate circumstance, as that of Kolotskoi was far from being sufficient for our necessities. Napoleon resolved to remain at Mojaïsk for the cure of his own indisposition; intending to rejoin the army as soon as it should have arrived at the gates of Moscow, that he might accompany it on its entrance, or direct its movements should it have to fight another battle.

The Russians continued their retreat, and the French their pursuit. Prince Eugene having taken the lateral route on the left, seized Kouza a pretty little town, abounding in resources, just before the furious peasants had time to destroy it; and made a day's halt here, collecting provisions for the use of the grand army. On the lateral route on the right, Prince Poniatowski was equally successful in obtaining the means of subsistence, since he left the enemy no time to fulfil the dictates of their rage.

The principal column under Murat arrived at Krimskoié on the 10th of September. The leader of the Russian rear guard, Miloradovitch, wishing to take advantage of a good position, which he had observed near the marshy sources of the Nara, posted his light infantry and artillery behind a muddy tract of ground, covered with thick brushwood, the only means of approach to which was by the great road which he took care to occupy in force. The whole day was passed by the opposed troops in a struggle around this position, and many men were lost on both sides, but at nightfall the Russians were forced to retreat, leaving behind them nearly two thousand killed and wounded.

On the 11th the French reached Koubinskoïé, on the 12th Momonowo, and on the 13th Worobiewo, the position immediately before Moscow; at the very gates of which the Russian army had established itself towards the Dorogomilow barrier. The Moskowa on entering Moscow, where it describes numerous windings, forms a very concave arc, open on the side of the Smolensk road; and against this the Russian army leant back, supporting its right on the village of Fili, and its left at the top of Worobiewo, tracing in a certain measure the cord of the arc described by the Moskowa; its only opening for retreat being a bridge leading across the Moskowa to the interior of the Dorogomilow faubourg.

This was scarcely a safe position in which to give battle to an enemy ; and of this Kutusof was perfectly conscious, being also thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of checking the advance of the French upon Moscow. But still faithful to his system of constantly flattering popular passion, because he believed that it might be more easily directed by means of flattery than by opposition, he had constantly written to Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, that he was to defend it to the utmost. There was considerable astonishment in Moscow, therefore, when the real state of the Russian army was discovered, and it took up a position so near to the town, that there remained no space for the execution of the movements which an engagement would render necessary. And although Kutusof had resolved to save his army rather than the capital, he called a council of war that he might share the responsibility he was about to incur with his lieutenants. In spite of the cunning and coldness of his nature he could not but be agitated as he heard the cries of rage which arose around him, and the voice a thousand times repeated, rather to perish under the ruins of Moscow than abandon it to the French—a vow dictated by feelings very similar to those which might lead a man rather to stab his cherished spouse in his very arms than yield her up to the outrages of others. But Kutusof knew that Russia would not necessarily be lost because Moscow might fall into the hands of the French, and that, on the other hand, it would be lost if the grand army should be destroyed. At the same time he would have been glad to throw the odium of measures which he knew to be necessary upon others, and he summoned to the memorable council which now assembled on the Worobiewo height, Generals Benningsen, Barclay de Tolly, Doctoroff, Ostermann, Konownitsyn, and Yermoloff. Colonel Toll assisted at it as quarter-master-general. Barclay de Tolly, with his usual simplicity and practical experience, declared the position then occupied to be untenable, affirmed that the preservation of the capital was of but slight importance in comparison with the preservation of the army, and advised that it should evacuate Moscow, retreating by the Wladimir road, by which means new tracts of territory would be added to those which the French army had already had to traverse, and the Russian army would not only be left in communication with St. Petersburg, but be able, at the right moment, to resume the offensive. Benningsen, who was perfectly capable of appreciating this advice, but who was unwilling to incur the odium of supporting it, maintained that the Russian army should defend to the utmost the sacred city of Moscow ; and Konownitsyn, yielding in like manner to popular opinion,

also supported the plan of making an obstinate resistance, but with the provision that they should leave the position in which they were then encamped, and find another by advancing towards the enemy. Generals Ostermann and Yermoloff were of the same opinion, and, indeed, it was the expression of the courage of despair. But Colonel Toll, on the other hand, proposed that the army should retreat, advancing immediately to the right upon the Kolocza road, by which means it would be able to take up a position at once threatening to the enemy's communications, and in direct relation to the richest provinces of the south. As is generally the case under such circumstances, this council of war was agitated, confused, and filled with opposite counsels.

Kutusof had already, however, determined upon his course of action and we must confess that it was worthy of a great captain. Of all the various counsels which had been given none had been thoroughly good although most possessed certain recommendations. To have fought a battle for the sake of Moscow would have been utterly unwise. To have defended it against the enemy as Saragossa had been defended, barricading the streets and arousing the whole of its population to the aid of the army, would have certainly been to have involved its destruction, for it was not built of stone, like Saragossa, but of wood, and it could not in this case but have perished by the flames. The only means, in fact, in the power of the Russians of preserving Moscow from the grasp of the French was by effecting its destruction, but such an idea as this had not yet been entertained, for no one desired the destruction of this capital, and its capture by the French was not regarded as equivalent to its being destroyed.

To retreat, then, appeared the only course open to the Russian army. To fall back upon Wladimir, as Barclay de Tolly proposed, would have been to push the system of retreat too far, and would have involved the loss of communications with the south of the empire, which was far richer in resources of every kind than the north. Thus the only line of retreat, which could wisely be adopted was upon the right of Moscow (the right as regarded us), which would lead the Russian army upon the communications of the French, and place it in direct communication with the south provinces and the army returning from Turkey. But to have marched immediately in this direction as was proposed by Colonel Toll, would have been to have excited the French to instant pursuit, and to have revealed the plan of the system of retreat, which now that the French had been enticed so far, consisted in manœuvring upon their flanks with the purpose of attacking them when



they should have been sufficiently enfeebled. A much better mode of action was to retreat across Moscow itself, to leave this city in the hands of the French, to take advantage of the time during which they would certainly be employed in seizing upon this rich prey, to defile tranquilly before them, and then, turning round Moscow to take upon their flank that threatening position which Colonel Toll advised should be taken immediately and without the intervention of any manœuvres. This was the plan drawn by the old Russian General from all the various counsels which he had received ; drawn from them with a sagacity as profound as it was fatal to the French, and which, fatal as it was to us, cannot but demand the admiration of posterity.

It was accordingly determined that the Russian army should retreat during the night of the 13th of September, the rear guard avoiding combats with the French in order that Moscow, which the Russians were anxious to save, and which they believed that they were saving by leaving it in the hands of the French, might not be set on fire by the howitzers ; and that the retreat should be by the Riazan road, from which it would be easy, by means of a slight detour, to return some days later to the Kalouga road, on which it would subsequently be necessary to operate.

We must now turn to Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, a Russian full of savage passions concealed under polished manners, and inspired with a spirit of patriotism so furious that it had become fanaticism. He hated us as a Russian, he hated us as a member of the European aristocracy. He would have willingly sacrificed the city could he at the same time have destroyed twenty or thirty thousand Frenchmen ; and he considered that after having destroyed all the villages, there could be no honourable reason for sparing Moscow. As no proposal, however, had been made, that the army should barricade itself within the city and defend it to the last, he could only in silence brood over the idea which he cherished in the depths of his exasperated spirit. The futility of the hopes which had been kept up by General Kutusof had profoundly irritated him against the General, and he expressed himself to him with extreme bitterness ; but there was no time for recrimination : it was necessary to make immediate preparations for the evacuation of the city. In the excess of his hatred, Rostopchin was anxious that there should not be a single Russian left to adorn the triumph of the French, and using his authority as governor, he ordered all the inhabitants of Moscow to depart immediately, taking with them whatever they could, and he threatened the infliction of the most severe chastisements on those who



should not have quitted by the morrow. Moreover, such atrocious calumnies had been spread abroad with respect to the conduct of the French troops, that this was no occasion for the use of threats to induce the Russians to fly from before them. Nor was Rostopchin anxious only to leave the enemy a city without inhabitants. He was anxious, without calculating the consequences of such a measure, to leave them instead of a luxurious home, a heap of cinders amongst which they would be able to find no means of supporting existence, which should be a testimony of the terrible hatred with which they had inspired the Russian heart, which should be a declaration of war to the death. But to have breathed such a project to any one would have been to render its execution impossible. The gentle spirit of Alexander would have revolted at such a proposal; the Generals would have shrunk from the responsibility of sharing such a secret; and to have submitted such a design to the inhabitants would have been to excite them more furiously against the author of it than even against the French. But although he was thus forced to keep his purpose profoundly secret, he had accumulated, under the pretence of fabricating an infernal machine against the French, an immense quantity of inflammable materials in one of his gardens; and when the hour for the evacuation had arrived, he selected as executors of his project, those infamous persons who possessed nothing but the prisons in which their crimes had procured them an asylum, and who possessed an innate taste for the work of destruction. To these criminals he committed the task, when the evacuation should have been completed, of secretly and thoroughly firing the city, assuring them that by thus ravaging their country they would be performing for her the most useful of services. At the same time, in order that the French might have no means of checking the conflagration, he had all the pumps destroyed. On the morning of the 14th he followed the army from the city, taking with him none of his wealth, and consoling himself for its loss by the idea of the terrible surprise he had prepared for the French.

During the evening and night of the 13th and a portion of the 14th of September, the Russian army defiled across the city of Moscow, and stopped at the Moskowa bridge which, was the only one remaining at this point, they accumulated in the Drogomilow faubourg in such a manner as to show very plainly how great a disaster might have been the result of a retreat across Moscow after a defeat. The disorder throughout the unhappy capital was at its height. The wealthy, whether nobles or merchants, had withdrawn to their most distant estates; and the remainder of the inhabitants, sub-

mitting to the odious edict imposed upon them, and filled also with the idea that the French would fire the town, quitted their dwellings in a state of despair, carrying with them their most precious possessions in carriages or on their shoulders. Knowing not whither to go, or how they should be able to procure the means of subsistence, the bulk of the population uttering the most frightful lamentations, mechanically followed the army. Some of the inhabitants, however, had declined to take part in this flight, preferring to remain in the city with the victorious French, (whose real mode of acting they had become better acquainted with than their compatriots) rather than follow in the track of an army of whose line of march or proposed movements they were utterly ignorant. Amongst these latter were many merchants of various nations and especially of our own, who had no fear of the French, but for whom the moment of the evacuation was one of the most frightful terror, for they suddenly learned that as the Russian troops left the city with the authorities, three thousand abandoned wretches would be let loose to indulge in unrestrained pillage. With trembling impatience, therefore, these unhappy inhabitants awaited in their houses the arrival of the army which was to replace the one departing.

In the meantime, Miloradovitch, perceiving that the evacuation of the city would occupy some hours, proposed to the French advanced guard that all hostilities should be suspended whilst it was taking place, as well for the sake of those who were about to enter as of those who were departing, since an attack would necessarily call forth a desperate defence, and consequently cause the entire destruction of the city. An officer was despatched to Murat with this proposal.

With rapid steps the French army advanced towards the heights whence they hoped to perceive at length the great city of Moscow; and if the Russians were filled with the utmost sadness, the hearts of the French were equally inspired with feelings of joy and triumph, and the most brilliant illusions. Reduced from four hundred and twenty thousand, which was its number at the passage of the Niemen, to one hundred thousand, and utterly exhausted, our army forgot all its troubles on its approach to the brilliant capital of Muscovy. There were many officers and soldiers in its ranks who had been at the Pyrenees, to the banks of the Jordan, to Rome, Milan, Madrid, Vienna, and Berlin, and who trembled with emotion at the idea that they were about to visit, also, Moscow, the most powerful metropolis of the East. Doubtless, the hope of finding there repose, abundance, and

probably peace, contributed to their feelings of satisfaction on the occasion, but Imagination, the empress of all hearts, and especially of those of soldiers, Imagination, we say, was strongly excited within them at the idea of entering Moscow, after having entered all the other capitals of Europe with the exception of London, protected by the sea. Whilst Prince Eugene advanced on the left of the army, and Prince Poniatowski on its right, the bulk of the army, with Murat at its head, Davoust and Ney in the centre, and the guard in the rear, followed the great Smolensk road. Napoleon was in the midst of his troops, who, as they gazed upon him and drew near to Moscow, forgot the days of discontent, and uttered loud shouts in honour of his glory and their own.

The proposal submitted by Miloradovitch was readily accepted, for the French had no desire to destroy Moscow, and it was agreed that not a shot should be fired during the evacuation, on condition that the Russian army should continue to defile across the city without a moment's halt.

At length, having reached the summit of a hill, the army beheld beneath it an immense city, brilliant with a thousand colours, crowned with a multitude of domes, gleaming in the sunlight, and altogether, with its mingled Gothic and Byzantine aspect, realising what is told in Oriental tales of the marvels of Asia. Monasteries flanked with towers formed its girdle, and in its centre, on an eminence arose a strong citadel, a species of capitol, where, side by side stood temples reared to God and imperial palaces; where above embattled walls arose majestic domes, bearing the emblem which is the epitome of the whole of Russian history and Russian ambition—the Cross above the reversed Crescent. This citadel was the Kremlin, the ancient dwelling-place of the Czars.

At the magic sight, their imaginations and their love of glory alike excited, the soldiers cried out together, "Moscow! Moscow!" Nor was Napoleon less deeply moved by it. Arrived at that point of his greatness from which he was to descend so rapidly to ruin, he experienced a species of intoxication, forgot all the reproaches which his good sense, which is the conqueror's only conscience, had addressed to him during the last two months, and believed that he had performed an act of great and fortunate rashness, justified by the event, in having dared to march from Paris to Smolensk, from Smolensk to Moscow. And his lieutenants, in like manner forgot the discontent they had so frequently experienced during the progress of the campaign, and bestowed upon him those congratulations which they had failed to express after the battle of Borodino.



Murat was ordered to march with rapidity, for the purpose of preventing any disorder. General Durasnel was sent forward to communicate with the authorities, and to lead them to the feet of the conqueror; and M. Denni   was ordered to go on to prepare provisions and bivouacs for the troops. When Murat reached the Moskowa bridge, he found a Russian rear-guard, which was retreating, and having inquired who was the commanding officer, he held out his hand to the white-haired old warrior who was pointed out to him, and the latter took it with empressement. So readily subsides even national hatred before true valour. The Russian rear-guard defiled rapidly to yield the ground to our advanced guard, and the King of Naples, followed by his staff and a detachment of cavalry, plunged into the streets of Moscow, and traversing by turns the humblest quarters and the wealthiest, perceived everywhere the most profound solitude, and seemed to have entered a city of the dead. Suddenly a few persons made their appearance, Frenchmen, who had been established in Moscow, and who begged, in the name of Heaven, for protection from the brigands who had been left in possession of the city. They were received with much kindness, and attempting, although in vain, to dissipate their fears, the French troops accompanied them to the Kremlin, where they were immediately fired upon by the bandits whom Rostopchin's furious patriotism had let loose. Many of them were sabred by our soldiers, and the Kremlin was immediately freed from their presence. But the information which was now obtained, that the whole population of the city had fled, saddened the exultation of the commanders of our advanced guard, who had flattered themselves that they would have had the pleasure of surprising the inhabitants by their kindness.

The information sent to Napoleon of the actual state of affairs deeply afflicted him. He had waited during the whole afternoon the arrival of the keys of the city, and the prayers of a submissive population for that mercy which he was always ready to accord to the vanquished. This disappointment, so immediately succeeding to a moment of triumph was, so to speak, the dawn of ill fortune. Being unwilling to enter during the night a city which an implacable enemy had but just left, and which might very possibly contain many ambushes, Napoleon paused in the Drogomilow faubourg, sending forward detachments of cavalry to take possession of the gates, and to act as police. Eugene on the left guarded the gate on the St. Petersburg road: whilst Davoust in the centre, guarded the Smolensk gate, by which the bulk of our army would enter, and extended his troops on his right as far as



that of Toulâ. The cavalry, which had passed through the city, was to guard the gates on the north and east, opposite to those by which we were about to enter. From our ignorance of the city, however, many means of egress were left open, and twelve or fifteen thousand stragglers of the Russian army were thus enabled to make their escape. There remained, indeed, fifteen thousand wounded whom the Russians recommended to our humanity; but to Russian humanity should they rather have recommended them, for they perished by other hands than ours.

On the morning of the 15th September, Napoleon entered Moscow, at the head of his invincible legions, but passed through a deserted city, and his soldiers were now for the first time on entering a capital the sole witnesses of their own glory. Their feelings on the occasion were sad ones. As soon as Napoleon had reached the Kremlin, he hastened to ascend the lofty tower of the great Ivan, and to survey from its elevation the magnificent city he had conquered. The Moskowa flowed at his feet, traversing the capital with numerous windings. Thousands of black-plumaged birds, crows and ravens, as numerous in those regions as are the pigeons in Venice around the palaces and churches, gave to the great city a singular aspect, which contrasted strongly with the splendour of its brilliant colours. A sullen silence, broken only by the tramp of the cavalry, had replaced that populous life which during the very previous evening had rendered the city one of the most animated in the world.

The army was distributed through the various quarters of Moscow, Prince Eugene occupying the north-west quarter, Marshal Davoust the south-west, and Prince Poniatowski the south-east. Marshal Ney who had traversed Moscow from west to east, established his troops in the district comprised between the Riazan and Wladimir roads; and the guard was naturally posted at the Kremlin and in its environs. The houses were full of provisions of every kind, and the first necessities of the troops were readily satisfied. The superior officers were received at the gates of palaces by numerous servants in livery, eager in offering a brilliant hospitality; for the owners of these palaces, perfectly unaware that Moscow was about to perish, had taken great pains, although they fully shared the national hatred against the French, to procure protectors for their rich dwellings by receiving into them French officers. And with extreme delight the latter plunged into the midst of a luxury fraught with all those signs of sensuousness which form so strange but frequent a contrast with ardent popular devotion and savage military energy, in nations which

have suddenly arisen from a barbarous state to a civilized one; for the first lesson which men learn from those who have learned how to live, is how to live pleasantly.

From their splendid lodgings, the officers of the French army wandered with equal delight through the midst of the city, which resembled a Tartar camp sown with Italian palaces. They contemplated with wonder the numerous towns of which the capital is composed, and which are placed in concentric circles, the one within the other: first, in the very centre, on an eminence, on the bank of the Moskowa, was the Kremlin, surrounded with ancient towers, and filled with gilded churches; at the foot of the Kremlin, and under its protection, as it were, was the Old Town, called the Chinese Town, in allusion to the old and genuine Russian commerce, that of the East, then, surrounding these was a large, spacious town, thronged with palaces, which was called the White Town, and finally, encircling the whole, there was the Earth Town, as it was called, consisting of a mixture of groves and villages, and new and imposing edifices, and surrounded by an earthen *épaulement*. And of all these four towns, prominent features were many hundreds of churches surmounted by domes fashioned, as in the East, to the form of immense turbans, and bell towers, which manifested that Russia had had intercourse of old with Persia and Turkey: for it is a singular circumstance, that whilst religions oppose each other, they nevertheless imitate each other in matters of art. A few days before, Moscow had contained a population of three hundred thousand souls, of whom scarcely a sixth part now remained, and of these the greater number were concealed in their houses, or prostrated at the foot of the altars. The streets were deserts, and only echoed with the footsteps of our soldiers.

Although they had become sole possessors of the disputed city, our troops, always sociable, were distressed that there were none whom they might astonish by their gentleness after having terrified them by their boldness. But although the solitude of the city was a source of great vexation to them, they had no suspicion of any approaching catastrophe, for the Russian army, which alone had hitherto devastated their country, had departed, and there appeared to be no fear of fire.

The French army hoped, therefore, to enjoy comfort in Moscow, to obtain, probably, peace by means of its possession, and at least good winter cantonments, in case the war should be prolonged. But on the afternoon they had entered, columns of flame arose from a vast building containing vast quantities of spirits, and just as our soldiers had almost suc-

ceeded in mastering the fire in this spot, a violent conflagration suddenly burst forth in a collection of buildings called the Bazaar, situated to the north-east of the Kremlin, and containing the richest magazines, abounding in stores of the exquisite tissues of India and Persia, the rarities of Europe, colonial produce, and precious wines. The troops of the guard immediately hastened up and attempted to subdue the flames, but their energetic efforts were unfortunately unsuccessful, and the immense riches of the establishment fell a prey to the fire, with the exception of some portions which our men were able to snatch from the devouring element. This fresh accident was again attributed to natural causes, and considered as easily explicable in the tumult of an evacuation.

During the night of the 15th of September, however, a sudden change came over the scene; for then, as though every species of misfortune were to fall at the same moment on the ancient Muscovite capital, the equinoctial gales suddenly arose with the extreme violence usual to the season, and in countries where wide spread plains offer no resistance to the storm. This wind, blowing first from the east, carried the fire to the west into the streets comprised between the Iwer and Smolensk routes, which were the most beautiful and the richest in all Moscow. Within some hours the fire, spreading with frightful rapidity, and throwing out long arrows of flame, spread to the other westward quarters. And soon rockets were observed in the air, and wretches were seized in the act of spreading the conflagration. Interrogated under threat of instant death they revealed the frightful secret, the order given by Count Rostopchin for the burning of the city of Moscow as though it had been a simple village on the Moscow route. This information filled the whole army with consternation. Napoleon ordered that military commissions should be formed in each quarter of the city for the purpose of judging, shooting, and hanging, incendiaries taken in the act; and that all the available troops should be employed in extinguishing the flames. Immediate recourse was had to the pumps, but it was found they had been removed; and this latter circumstance would have proved, if indeed any doubt on the matter had remained, the terrible determination with which Moscow had been given to the flames.

In the meantime, the wind, increasing in violence every moment, rendered the efforts of the whole army ineffectual, and suddenly changing with the abruptness peculiar to equinoctial gales, from the east to the north-west, it carried the torrent of flame into quarters which the hands



of the incendiaries had not yet been able to fire. And after having blown during some hours from the north-west, the wind once more changed its direction and blew from the south-west, as though it had a cruel pleasure in spreading ruin and death over the unhappy city, or rather, over our army. By this change of the wind to the south-west the Kremlin was placed in extreme peril. More than four hundred ammunition waggons were in the court of the Kremlin, and the arsenal contained some four hundred thousand pounds of powder. There was imminent danger, therefore, that Napoleon with his guard, and the palace of the Czars, might be blown up into the air.

The officers who surrounded him, and the artillerymen who knew that his death would be their own, thronged about him with entreaties that he would retire from so dangerous a position. The peril was most threatening; and even the old artillerymen of the guard, although accustomed to such cannonades as that of Borodino, almost lost their *sang froid*. General Lariboisière at length approached Napoleon, and with the authority he had by virtue of his age and his devotion, entreated that the troops might be permitted to save themselves without having their embarrassment increased by the excitement caused by the presence of their Emperor. Several officers, moreover, who had been sent into the adjacent quarters to make enquiries, reported that it was scarcely possible to traverse the burning streets, and that to depart immediately was the only means of escaping from being buried under the ruins of the doomed city.

Napoleon, therefore, followed by some of his lieutenants, descended from the Kremlin to the quay of the Moskowa, where he found his horses ready for him, and had much difficulty in threading the streets, which, towards the north-west, in which direction he proceeded, were already in flames. The terrified army set out from Moscow; the divisions of Prince Eugene and Marshal Ney fell back upon the Zwenigarod and Saint Petersburg roads. Those of Marshal Davoust fell back upon the Smolensk route, and with the exception of the guard, which was left around the Kremlin, to dispute its possession with the flames, our troops drew back in horror from before the fire, which, after flaming up to heaven, darted back towards them as though it wished to devour them. The few inhabitants who had remained in Moscow, and had hitherto lain concealed in their dwellings, now fled, carrying away such of their possessions as they valued most highly, uttering lamentable cries of distress, and, in many instances, falling victims to the brigands whom Rostopchin had let loose, and who now exulted in the midst of the conflagration, as the genius of evil in the midst of chaos.



Napoleon took up his quarters at the château of Petrowskoïé, a league's distance from Moscow on the Saint Petersburg route, in the centre of the cantonments of the troops under Prince Eugene, awaiting there the subsidence of the conflagration, which had now reached such a height, that it was beyond human power either to increase or extinguish it.

As a final misfortune, the wind changed on the following day, from south-west to direct west, and then the torrents of flame were carried towards the eastern quarters of the city, the streets Messnitskaia and Bassmanaia, and the summer palace. As the conflagration reached its terrible height, frightful crashes were heard every moment; roofs crushing inwards, and stately façades crumbling headlong into the streets, as their supports became consumed in the flames. The sky was scarcely visible through the thick cloud of smoke which overshadowed it, and the sun was only apparent as a blood-red globe. For three successive days, the 16th, the 17th, and the 18th of September, this terrific scene continued, and in unabated intensity.

At length, after having devoured four-fifths of the city, the fire ceased, gradually quenched by the rain, which, as is usually the case, succeeded the violence of the equinoctial gales. As the flames subsided, only the spectre as it were, of what had once been a magnificent city, was visible; and, indeed, the Kremlin, and about a fifth part of the city were alone saved; their preservation being chiefly due to the exertions of the imperial guard.

As the inhabitants of Moscow themselves entered the ruins seeking what property still remained in them undestroyed, it was scarcely possible to prevent our soldiers from acting in the same manner, and accordingly searching among the crumbling edifices, they speedily penetrated to the cellars and found there quantities of provisions still in great part uninjured by the fire, and in an abundance, which was due to the custom prevailing in the country, on account of the length of the winters, of storing up provisions for many months. In many of the houses, also, which the fire had injured sufficiently to render their pillage excusable without actually destroying them, were found the most exquisite articles of luxury, furs, and plate, which latter spoil the troops, in their improvidence, preferred to either food or clothing, and superb porcelain, which in their ignorance they despised or idly destroyed.

It was a lamentable and grotesque spectacle which was now presented, as the crowd of our troops and the inhabitants of the city thronged the smoking embers of the splendid

city, laughing at the singular costumes in which they had robed themselves, bearing in their hands articles of the utmost value, selling them for the most insignificant prices to those capable of appreciating their value, or dashing them to pieces in pure wantonness. And this wild and melancholy scene, in which intoxication was also a great element, for quantities of liquors had been discovered in the cellars, was rendered still more sad by the return of the unfortunate inhabitants who had fled at the moment of the evacuation or the breaking out of the fire, and who now returned, for the most part, to weep over the ruins of their dwellings, or to dispute with an unbridled mob, the fragments still remaining of their possessions. Their only shelter the huts they could construct of the ruins which lay around them, their only beds the cinders of their former dwellings, they had no other food but what they might be able to beg from our troops. Thus gradually and mournfully, the population of Moscow returned; and with them, came back, equally in search of their former habitations, and uttering the most dismal croakings, the clouds of crows and ravens whom the flames had driven away. And of this horrible scene, the chiefest horror of all remains to be told; the Russians had left fifteen thousand wounded in Moscow, and incapable of escaping, they had perished, victims of Rostopchin's barbarous patriotism.

On the 19th of September, deeply saddened by the terrible events which had taken place, Napoleon re-entered Moscow. He had continued his march as far as this city, in spite of all the objections urged by his genius against the adoption of such a plan, in the hope of finding peace there, as he had found it at Vienna and at Berlin; but what could be expected of a people capable of committing so terrible an act, and giving so cruel a proof of implacable hatred? On each of those burned palaces, on which there remained but the blackened walls Napoleon seemed to see written in words of blood and fire—"No peace—war to the death!"

Napoleon's feelings during this terrible conflagration were the bitterest and most sombre he had ever experienced in the course of his life. He had never hitherto lost his confidence in his own good fortune, neither at Arcola, on the bridge which he could not cross, nor at Saint Jean d'Acre at the moment when the eighth assault had been repulsed, nor at Marengo, nor at Eylau, nor at Essling. But now for the first time, he seemed to perceive the possibility that he might be the subject of some great disaster.

However, without permitting himself to be overwhelmed by the consideration of what might possibly be the con-

sequences of the conflagration of Moscow, he employed himself in giving orders which were demanded equally by humanity and the interests of his army. He issued the most stringent commands for the suppression of pillage, and with some difficulty the prevalent disorder was suppressed, and regular searches established throughout the town for the discovery of its resources. The city was partitioned out between the various corps of the army almost as on the day of its arrival, each having its tête de colonne at the Kremlin, and its chief bulk in that portion of the city at which it had made its entry; Prince Eugene's troops being between the Saint Petersburg and Smolensk gates, Marshal Davoust's between those of Smolensk and Kalouga, Prince Poniatowski's towards the Toulga gate, the cavalry beyond it, in pursuit of the enemy, Marshal Ney's eastward between the Riazan and Wladimir gates, and the guard in the centre, at the Kremlin. The houses which had escaped the conflagration were reserved for the officers, and the great buildings were converted into magazines to which the troops each day conveyed what they found in the city, so that there might be a reserve of provisions for the use of the army whether it continued in Moscow or departed from it.

But although sufficient bread and salted provisions were procured in this manner for the consumption of the army during many months, fresh provisions could not be provided without cattle, which again could not exist without forage, and on this subject as well as with respect to the absolute necessity of forage for the artillery and cavalry horses there was felt the greatest anxiety. Napoleon hoped to supply the necessity, first by extending his advanced posts ten or fifteen leagues from Moscow, and thus embracing a space sufficiently large to contain vegetables and forage in the requisite quantities; and, in the second place, by gaining over the peasants to his service by means of good pay. Paper roubles being the money which was current in Russia, and the French army chest containing a large quantity of them, fabricated in a manner which has already been described, but of which there was then no suspicion, he caused it to be announced that all provisions, and especially forage, brought into Moscow, would be paid for, and directed that those peasants who answered to the appeal should receive ample protection. He also paid the army in these paper roubles, at the same time arranging, however, that those officers who desired to send their pay to France, should be able to exchange this paper for genuine money at the government treasuries.

At the same time he afforded succour to all those whom the conflagration had deprived of their homes, preferring,



however, to give them money that they might procure provisions for themselves, rather than supply strangers, who were at the same time enemies, from those magazines of which it was so absolutely necessary to be careful. The French inhabitants of Moscow were treated as our own troops, and the educated persons amongst them were charged with the establishment of a provisional municipal administration.

Beneath the walls of the Kremlin was a vast building which had attracted Napoleon's notice from his first entrance into Moscow, and was a foundling hospital, from which most of the children had been conveyed, but which, on account of the great difficulty of conveying infants of tender years, still contained, on our entrance into Moscow, some children of four or five years of age who, grouped around the venerable governor of the hospital, General Toutelmine, awaited our approach with tears and trembling. As soon as Napoleon was informed of the circumstance he sent a guard thither, which watched over the noble institution both before and during the conflagration. On his return to Moscow he visited the hospital on foot, and was received at the gate by General Toutelmine, surrounded by his pupils who threw themselves at Napoleon's feet, kissing his hands, and catching hold of the skirts of his coat, eager to thank him for having preserved their lives. "Surely," said Napoleon to the old general, "surely your children did not suppose that my troops would have devoured them? That we French were as barbarous as the men who govern you? As absurd as the governor of Moscow?—For what purpose are all these ruins? For what purpose are such savage deeds performed, deeds which must cost Russia more than she could possibly have suffered from the most disastrous war? A thousand millions would not pay for the loss suffered in the destruction of Moscow alone. If, in place of yielding to this madness, you had spared your capital, I would have been as careful of it as of Paris itself; and I would have written to your sovereign proposing to him equitable and moderate conditions of peace, and this terrible war would have been almost at an end. But as it is, the course of destruction must still continue, for I am far from the period of my departure from the Russian territory, and God alone knows what this war must still cost humanity." General Toutelmine, who detested, in common with all the inhabitants of Moscow, the deed which Rostopchin had executed, acknowledged the justice of Napoleon's observations, expressed his regret that Napoleon's disposition toward Russia was not better understood, and seemed to intimate that if it were properly understood at Saint Petersburg, affairs would speedily wear a very different complexion. Napoleon



seized the occasion which, indeed, he had taken pains to bring about, and when General Toutelmine, in answer to his permission to him to ask for whatever he might desire for the children under his charge, requested leave to inform the Empress, who was the patroness of the hospital, that his pupils were safe, Napoleon invited him to write, promising to take care that his letter reached its destination. "May I mention," said the old General, "the tone of the observations which your majesty has addressed to me?" "Yes," replied Napoleon; "Say that if the enemies who are interested in fomenting quarrels between us, should cease to interfere between the Emperor Alexander and myself, peace would be soon concluded between us."

Toutelmine's letter was immediately written, and was on its way to Saint Petersburg before the end of the day. Almost at the same time, Napoleon held an interview with a Russian, apparently of some distinction, who had remained at Moscow, and who, less blinded by passion than were most of his compatriots, deeply deplored the atrocious fury of Rostopchin. In conversation with this person, Napoleon declared, as he had previously declared to General Toutelmine, that he had desired to carry on a political war, and not a social and destructive one. That Lithuania might have been the theatre of such a war, in lieu of Muscovy itself, that then one or two battles might have decided the dispute, and a treaty, consisting of very easy conditions, have re-established the alliance between France and Russia, and not the dependence of the latter upon the former, as had been asserted for the purpose of exciting national fury. But instead of this plan having been adopted, he said, every attempt had been made on the part of Russia, to give an atrocious character to the war worthy of the negroes of Saint Domingo, whilst Count Rostopchin, wishing to play the Roman, had displayed all the characteristics of a barbarian.

M. de Jakowleff, the Russian to whom Napoleon expressed these sentiments, disputed none of Napoleon's assertions, for having before his eyes, as he had, the horrible sufferings endured by the wretched inhabitants of Moscow, he was indignant with Rostopchin, and considered that such a war should be concluded as soon as possible, or, at least, conducted on a different plan. He urged upon Napoleon, as General Toutelmine had done, that he should make his pacific inclinations known at Saint Petersburg, and Napoleon, who desired nothing better, proposed to M. de Jakowleff that he should himself be the bearer to Saint Petersburg of a written declaration of the sentiments he had

just heard expressed. M. de Jakowleff accepted the mission with the utmost alacrity, and set out with a letter for Alexander, couched in terms which were at once courteous and haughty.

The inconvenience attending these overtures, was doubtless, that they displayed in some degree the embarrassments into which we had already fallen ; but on the other hand it was certain that the Russian Emperor would be prevented by his pride, which had been deeply wounded, from taking the initiative.

In the meantime, General Sebastiani, who had replaced Murat at the head of the advanced guard, was compelled to acknowledge that he had been deceived by the Russians as effectually as at Borodino. In fact, whilst following Kutusof's army at first along the Wladimir route, and afterwards by that of Riazan, he had crossed the Moskowa at about eight or nine leagues from Moscow in pursuit of the Russians, and seeing always before him parties of Cossacks, and troops of regular cavalry, he had proceeded in a southeasterly direction as far as Bronitcy, a distance of twenty leagues at least, constantly mistaking the shadow for the reality. But having arrived at that point, he perceived that he had fallen into error, the enemy not being in front of him, and he frankly sent word to Moscow that he knew not where to find them. At the same time information was received that two squadrons escorting ammunition waggons, and advancing upon Moscow by the Smolensk route, had been surprised by a cloud of Cossacks in the environs of Mojaisk, and forced to surrender with their convoy. The alarm was speedily given along the whole route from Moscow to Smolensk, and a cry was already raised that the enemy had descended upon our line of communications, and was from henceforth in a position to cut off our retreat.

On receiving this information, which reached Moscow during the 21st and 22nd September, Napoleon was excessively irritated against General Sebastiani, notwithstanding the esteem in which he held him, and ordered Murat to proceed immediately to the head of the advanced guard, taking with him Poniatowski's corps, although it was thoroughly fatigued and worn out, in order that, being accompanied by troops speaking the Slavonic tongue, he might the more easily discover the route of the Russian army. As the incursions of the Cossacks afforded reasons for believing that General Kutusof had executed a flank movement upon our right with the purpose of marching upon our rear by the Kalouga route, Napoleon directed Murat to proceed from

south-east to south, in other words, from the Riazan route to the Toula route, and to continue his march until he should receive information of Kutusof. At the same time, being unwilling to leave the search for the Russian army in the hands of Murat alone, he despatched by the Kalouga Gate, with orders to march upon Kalouga itself, Marshal Bessières with the lancers of the guard, Grouchy's cavalry, the light cavalry and the fourth division of Marshal Davoust's infantry; and finally, he threw back by the Smolensk route the dragoons of the guard, a division of cuirassiers, and the division Broussier of Prince Eugene's corps. He was himself almost certain that Kutusof would be found on the Kalouga route, being drawn into that direction by the double object of threatening our rear, and placing himself in communication with the richest provinces of the Empire. But although he was almost convinced that this was the case, he was nevertheless impatient to obtain positive information. He did not share the terrors of those who feared that we should be cut off, but he was resolved not to permit Kutusof to take up a threatening position on our rear, and was determined to go forth from Moscow to fight a second battle if the Russian General should take up a position too close to our army and the line of its retreat. Marshal Davoust, indeed, entreated Napoleon at once to combat and crush the enemy, and the Emperor was disposed to follow this advice, provided it could be executed without too protracted marches. He awaited, therefore, in a state of readiness for immediate departure, the arrival of information with respect to the new position which had been taken up by the Russian army.

We will now turn our attention to the plans formed by General Kutusof, and the movements executed by his army. The first intention of the Russian General on departing from Moscow, had been to adopt a medium course between all those which had been proposed, taking up a position on the French flank but refraining from turning too close to them, so as not to come too suddenly into contact with them. His first project, therefore, concerted with Alexander's aid-de-camp, the Piedmontese officer, Michaud, had been to fall back behind the Oka, a rapid river which, rising in the south, and passing by Orel, Kalouga, and Riazan, receives a number of tributaries, the Moskowa being one of them, and falls into the Wolga at Nijney-Nowogorod. But whilst the adoption of this plan would have afforded the Russian army a well covered position, and placed at its disposal all the resources of the southern provinces, it would, at the same time, have left open a vast field to the French foragers, and have infinitely added to the discouragement of the



Russian army, which had failed in its mission since it had not been able to defend Moscow. This army, in fact, began to be overwhelmed with despondency, and Kutusof, genuine Russian as he was, to be as unpopular with it as Barclay de Tolly.

Such was the state of affairs, when suddenly, during the terrible night of the 16th, the violent north-west wind carried to the Russian army, which was turning Moscow, the roaring and sombre glare of the flames of Moscow. The horrible spectacle, rising up from the horizon as the eruption of a volcano, drew the troops and the fugitive population of the city from their bivouacs, and as they summoned each other to view this terrible disaster to themselves and their country, their rage reached its height. The real incendiary, Rostopchin, and Kutusof who was not entrusted with Rostopchin's secret, but suspected it, hastened to declare that the French troops had caused the conflagration, and this calumny spread amongst the people and the troops with incredible rapidity. On all sides arose cries of rage; immediate vengeance was desired, and the troops demanded to be led immediately against the enemy. And thus, Rostopchin, whilst in burning Moscow he had deprived us of nothing, since there still remained in it sufficient roofs to shelter us, sufficient provisions to feed us, had nevertheless opened by this deed, an immense gulf between the two nations, excited against us the extreme national hatred of Russia, rendered negotiations impossible, and reanimated the energy of the Russian army, which the apparent uselessness of its efforts had begun to discourage.

This was not the moment, therefore, for falling back to any great distance from the French; and to have descended upon the Riazan route as far as the city of Kolomna would have been a course too apparently prudent, and uselessly so, for, occupied as it was in collecting the resources of Moscow, the French army was not in a position to follow and disturb that of Russia. Thus, when Kutusof had reached by the Riazan route the bank of the Moskowa, he considered that he ought to commence at this point his projected flank movement, giving a radius of ten leagues instead of thirty to the arc of the circle which he proposed to describe around Moscow, from east to south.

Taking advantage of some communications which had passed between General Sebastiani and General Raefskoi, for the purpose of avoiding useless conflicts, he had given orders that all the wishes of the French should be complied with for the purpose of lulling their vigilance, and completely concealing from them the direction which the Russian army was



about to pursue ; and, on the 17th, whilst a cavalry rear-guard continued to pursue the Riazan route, and to draw in this same direction General Sebastiani, the bulk of his army suddenly changing its direction, turned from the south-east to the south-west, and advanced behind the Pakra, a little river which, rising near the Smolensk route, pursued a circular course around Moscow, similar to that which the Russians wished to describe about it, and which would serve very suitably therefore as their line of defence. It was behind this river then, and not behind the Oka, that Kutusof took up his position, establishing himself, not precisely on the line of our communications, but beside it, and within a day's march of it.

Such was the situation of the Russian army when the corps of Murat and Bessières commenced their search for it ; Murat proceeding in a south-easterly direction, by the Riazan route, and Bessières a southerly one by the Toulâ route. The error into which General Sebastiani had fallen was speedily discovered, and Murat, turning to the right and ascending the Pakra, had speedily found the enemy's track, whilst Bessières, turning somewhat from the south to the south-west, arrived at Desna, where he found the bulk of the Russian rearguard, under the command of Miloradovitch. The French Generals had been ordered to push the enemy with extreme vigour, and consequently marched resolutely upon them, Murat, who had crossed the Pakra on the traces of the Russian army, threatening, in his turn, to take it in flank.

At the sight of Murat beyond the Pakra the courageous Benningsen was eager to rush upon and overwhelm him. But Kutusof, in addition to his jealousy of the proposer, had excellent reasons for declining this advice, for he was ignorant that Murat was present with only his cavalry and Poniatowski's infantry, and considering it very probable that he was accompanied by the whole of the French army, was unwilling to hazard the chances of an uncertain step at the moment when he was about to gather the fruits of the painful plan of campaign which he had adopted. From Kalouga he was about to receive considerable reinforcements of regular troops ; from the Ukraine he expected the arrival of a superb division of veteran Cossacks, and the inclement season which was approaching would probably weaken the French army to as great an extent as the Russian army was about to be reinforced. Kutusof was theoretically right, therefore, in resolving as he did to fall back upon the Kalouga route as far as would be necessary to enable him to avoid Murat.

Pursuing this course of action, Kutusof at length arrived

at Taroutino, behind the Nara, a river, which arising near the Smolensk route, in the environs of Krimskoié, pursues a course around Moscow but describing a more extended arc than the Pakra, and thus, instead of falling into the Moskowa, ending in the Oka. Its banks are escarped, especially the right bank, on which the Russians were established, and Kutusof determined to take advantage of the natural strength of the position, to establish there an almost impregnable camp, in which he would remain until his army had attained a strength which would enable it to attack the French at an advantage. Bessières and Murat who had followed him thus far now paused, not as though they had renounced the offensive, but as though they awaited fresh orders.

It was an important moment for Napoleon, a moment which would probably decide, not only the campaign, but his own fortunes ; and he ceased not, therefore, to ponder in the recesses of the Kremlin on the course which he ought to pursue. To expose the army to fresh fatigue in pursuit of the Russians without the certainty of coming up with them, appeared to Napoleon to be a plan perfectly inadmissible ; and as the month of September had passed by without the arrival of any reply to the overtures which had been sent to Saint Petersburg, it was necessary either to make provision for the establishment of the army in Moscow, or to depart from their capital for the purpose of drawing near to his magazines, his reinforcements, and his communications with France, or rather Poland.

The idea of passing the winter at Moscow, at a distance of three hundred leagues from Wilna, three hundred from Dantzic, and seven hundred from Paris, with no certainty of being able to procure means of subsistence, and the probability of being blockaded, not only by the country, but by the whole strength of the Russian forces, was utterly discountenanced by all save Napoleon, who considered that in a retrograde movement he would be acknowledging to the world that he had committed a great fault in marching thither, and that he despaired of obtaining then that peace which he had marched thither to seek ; and further, that to take such a step would be to lose, to a great extent, and perhaps altogether, that prestige by means of which he was enabled to hold Europe in subjection, to keep France docile, and preserve the confidence of his troops, and secure the fidelity of his allies.

It was not Napoleon's pride alone, therefore, which rendered him repugnant to the idea of making a retrograde movement, but his profound perception of his actual position

The check which his army had apparently received in the south, before Torres-Vedras, might be attributed to his own absence from the scene of the campaign, but should they encounter a similar check in the north, where he commanded in person at the head of his principal armies, it would be regarded as a sign that his career of victory had closed, and enslaved Europe, which awaited but the dawn of the slightest hope that he might be vanquished, would rise unanimously against him in his rear, and submerge the modern Pharaoh beneath the waves of an European insurrection.

Napoleon had good reason, therefore, to be excessively anxious to quit Moscow only as an enemy who was executing a manœuvre, and not to quit it as an enemy who was beating a retreat. And for this purpose the only plan that appeared to Napoleon worthy of adoption, was that which should unite the four following conditions: first, certain and constant communication with Paris; secondly, the approach of the army to its resources of provisions, equipments, and recruits; thirdly, the preservation of the undiminished prestige of our arms; and fourthly, continued support to the negotiations for peace which had recently been attempted. These four conditions he had found embodied in a plan which his inexhaustible genius, strongly excited as it was by the dangers of his situation, had conceived, and which was worthy to be ranked with any which he had yet devised. This plan consisted in an oblique retreat towards the north, which, in combination with an offensive movement carried on by the Duke of Belluna upon Saint Petersburg, would have the twofold advantage of reconducting us into Poland, and of leaving us at the same time in an attitude as menacing as ever, and consequently as fully capable of negotiating.

Napoleon had reserved, as we have already seen, besides the army of the Prince of Schwarzenberg on the Dnieper, and the army of Marshals Saint Cyr and Macdonald on the Dwina, the corps of the Duke of Belluna in the centre, which awaited at Smolensk ulterior orders. This corps, which numbered thirty thousand men, and could be raised to forty thousand, by incorporating with it a portion of the Westphalian, Saxon and Polish troops which had not yet had time to join, and the batallions de marche destined to recruit the army, might easily be carried to the north of the Dwina by the Saint Petersburg route through Witebsk, and Veliki-Luki. By the junction of the troops under Marshal St. Cyr, and a division of Marshal Macdonald's, it would number seventy thousand men, at least, ready to advance upon the second capital of Russia, the seat of government; and the Prince of Wittgenstein could not but promptly fall back before them



upon Saint Petersburg. At the moment when the Duke of Belluna should commence his movement, Napoleon with the guard, Prince Eugene, and Marshal Davoust, would withdraw obliquely to the north, in the direction of Veliki-Luki, marching almost parallel to the Smolensk route, and at a distance from it of about twelve or fifteen leagues, whilst Marshal Ney following with his corps the direct route from Moscow to Smolensk, would cover our retreat, and Murat, stealing away from Kutusof by a movement on his right, would proceed to Mojaïsk, and establish himself with Marshal Ney between Smolensk and Witebsk. After ten or twelve days march, in accordance with this profoundly devised plan, the army would be thus posted ;—the Duke of Belluna would be at Veliki-Luki with seventy thousand men threatening Saint Petersburg, Napoleon with seventy thousand at Wielij, ready to support him, or to join the thirty thousand men under Murat and Ney for the purpose of making head against Kutusof by whatever route he might advance. By pursuing this route we should be taking a line of march untraversed by troops and consequently well provisioned, we should be driving the Russians in a direction they could not pursue without losing half their reinforcements, and without having suffered any loss, either moral or physical, would retrieve the error of the march to Moscow by one of the boldest and most finely conceived marches which had ever been executed. At the same time there was every appearance that the winter subsistence of the troops would be easily procured, for the magazines established at Wilna might be readily transported, the roads in winter being easily traversed, to Polotsk and Witebsk ; and the immense quantity of cattle collected at Grodno would have no difficulty in arriving at Witebsk, since they would have to pass through a friendly country on their way to that place. And when the spring should have arrived, and Napoleon, having employed the whole winter in assembling new forces, should be ready to march with three hundred thousand men upon Saint Petersburg, it was most probable that the simple menace of such a march would be the means of procuring peace ; and if it did not, we should be able to occupy Saint Petersburg, without danger of finding this second capital wrapped in a conflagration, for it was far less generally built of wood than Moscow, and Muscovite fanaticism, moreover, had not attained there to the same intensity.

Conceived and matured in the latter days of September, and the commencement of October, this plan, than which Napoleon's genius had never conceived anything more pro-



found and admirable, might, by immediate departure, have been completely executed by the 15th of October, when the weather would most probably be still favourable, and when it was in fact extraordinarily fine. But all Napoleon's most excellent plans during this campaign, were destined to be frustrated by his error of being advanced to so great a distance. Having already demanded so much of his soldiers, and his lieutenants, and being able after having brought them so far, to offer them only the ruins of Moscow, he was compelled to be cautious in his treatment of them, and in place of imperiously commanding them, as he had been wont, to endeavour to persuade them to look favourably on his projects. To troops amongst whom prevailed wide spread lassitude and profound despondency, the result of the terrible spectacle of Moscow in ashes, and of secret dread of the fearful Russian winter, which within a month would be upon them, it was necessary not to speak as an imperious master justified in his commands of daily success, but as one who conciliates and consults, employing persuasions rather than orders. But when Napoleon submitted his plan to each of his lieutenants in succession, they protested, without exception, against a fresh progress northwards, an attempt against the second capital of Russia.

Napoleon's plan did not propose, in fact, to capture the second Russian capital, but an oblique retrograde movement upon Poland, and the assumption of a position behind a corps, which was, itself, not intended to advance against St. Petersburg, but simply to menace it. This was an essential distinction, but it was one which restless and desponding minds were not fitted to entertain.

Compelled, therefore, to abandon, or at least to adjourn, the sole plan capable of extricating him from his embarrassment, Napoleon permitted his thoughts to entertain various plans which at first he had regarded as entirely inadmissible, such as establishing the army in Moscow itself, and passing the winter there, or of placing a garrison in Moscow, and proceeding to take up his quarters in the rich province of Kalouga, from whence he would be able to extend his left to Toula, and his right to Smolensk. But to all these projects there were grave objections, which rendered him most anxious now for that peace which he had foolishly sacrificed to his pretensions of universal dominion, and which he now, although victorious, longed for as ardently as if he had been vanquished.

In the midst of these perplexities Napoleon conceived the idea of sending M. de Coulaincourt to St. Petersburg for the purpose of frankly opening a negotiation with the Emperor

Alexander, considering that whatever might be the embarrassments of his position, the fact of his treating from Moscow in the attitude of a victor, surrounded him with an air of power sufficient to justify such a step. But M. de Coulaincourt, who feared that the real difficulties of his position would be perceived through the disguise of this seeming power, and who feared, moreover, that he would not find at St. Petersburg the same favour which he had formerly enjoyed there, refused to undertake such a mission, affirming, and with reason, that it would not succeed. Napoleon then turned to M. de Lauriston, whose modest good sense he had too much despised, and directed him to proceed to the camp of General Kutusof, not for the purpose of negotiating peace, but of persuading the Russian Generalissimo to give the war a less ferocious character; not that this species of war embarrassed the French, for it had not prevented them from procuring subsistence, as was apparent from the abundance they were then enjoying amidst the smoking ruins of Moscow, but because they saw with regret a character impressed upon the war, which was simply political, a revolting character of barbarity and irreconcilable hatred.

Should these representations be listened to, M. de Lauriston was directed to proceed farther, asserting that the war had arisen rather from a misunderstanding than from actual causes of enmity, and was the work of the enemies of the two countries, who had fomented war between them to serve the purposes of England. He was to declare that terms of peace could be easily arranged, and that if Russia desired it they would not be rigorous. And finally, he was to exert himself to the utmost to obtain, at least, a provisional armistice.

M. de Lauriston set out on the 4th of October, having previously sent forward a letter to General Kutusof, announcing his desire for a personal interview with the General of the Russian army. On the same day he reached the enemy's camp. The prudent Russian General, surrounded by the most eager partisans of the war policy, and the English agents by whom he was eagerly watched, hesitated at first to grant a personal interview to M. de Lauriston from the fear of being compromised and called a traitor, as had been Barclay de Tolly. He sent, therefore, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, Prince Walkonsky, to receive and entertain the French General at Benningsen's quarters. But M. de Lauriston, offended at this proceeding, refused to confer with Prince Walkonsky, and retired to Murat's headquarters, declaring that he would only speak with the General-in-chief himself. This sudden rupture of relations

somewhat disturbed the Russian staff; for the vehement national hatred against the French began to subside amidst the higher ranks of the army, and they were unwilling to render peace quite impossible. And even the persons opposed to peace regretted the manner in which M. de Lauriston had been treated, although for a different motive, —their fear that this offensive treatment might induce the French army to advance against them full of anger and determination before the Russian army had been reinforced or reorganized. The astute Benningsen, who united cunning with audacity, sought an interview with Murat, and by feigning a desire for peace which was not real, enticed the latter into making similar protestations, which were but too apparently genuine. Similar interviews took place at the advanced posts between the officers of each army, and a species of armistice was thus established, the result of which was that it was agreed on the part of the Russians to receive M. de Lauriston at head-quarters.

Kutusof received M. de Lauriston with much politeness, and held with him many and long interviews, in the course of which, he declared that he had employed his utmost endeavours to preserve the character of the war, that of a regular war between civilized nations, but he had not been able to compel the Russian peasants to comply with his wishes, and he was not surprised that he had found it impossible to civilize in three months a people whom the French called barbarians. To M. de Lauriston's representations with respect to the burning of Moscow, he replied that he was far from accusing the French, and that he himself believed that this great sacrifice had been the result of Russian patriotism. In answer to the hints respecting the establishment of peace, or even an armistice, he represented himself as completely powerless to negotiate, and as being compelled to refer to the Emperor. He proposed, therefore, and the proposal was accepted, to send the aide-de-camp Walkonsky to St. Petersburg, to convey thither Napoleon's overtures, and to bring back a response. With regard to the armistice, it was agreed, that although the Russian General could not sign one, the advanced posts on either side should cease to carry on hostilities.

Although Napoleon had little expectation of peace after the conflagration of Moscow, and the fruitless overtures which had been made through M.M. Toutelmine and Jakowleff, he yet considered that it would be well to await the lapse of the ten or twelve days which it was said must pass before an answer could be received from St. Petersburg. Persons thoroughly acquainted



with the climate of the country had assured him that the frost would not set in until the middle or end of November, and he could not suppose that by setting out on the 15th or 18th of October, he would be setting out too late. In the meantime he made those preparations which would be necessary whether he should eventually determine to fall back on Smolensk, or to pass the winter in Moscow. He ordered Murat to hold himself in observation before the Taroutino camp, affording his troops as much repose and as good subsistence as possible, and sent him, to as great an extent as the means of transport allowed, the provisions drawn from the cellars of Moscow. He ordered a fresh movement in advance of the troops left in the rear, and of the battalions intended to recruit the various corps. He gave directions for the formation of a division of fifteen thousand men at Smolensk, which was to advance upon Jelnia for the purpose of co-operating with him should he advance upon Kalouga. He recommended the Duke of Belluna to hold himself in readiness to undertake movements in any direction; gave directions as to the manner in which the stragglers who had been assembled at Wilna, Minsk, Witebsk, and Smolensk, were to be reconducted to the army; and began to take measures relative to the removal of the wounded, whom he directed Junot to separate into three divisions, consisting severally of those who would be capable of marching, by the end of the following fortnight, of those who were not likely to recover until after a longer interval, and of those who were too ill to be removed, and of those three groups he directed him, neglecting the first and third, to remove the second to Wilna.

At the same time, as he considered it possible that the army might pass the winter in Moscow, he directed that the Kremlin should be put into a state of defence, that some of the principal convents in the city should be fortified, that ample provision of ammunition should be prepared for the army's six hundred cannon, and that the surplus should be carefully managed so as to secure sufficient to last the troops during five or six months. He endeavoured to conciliate the peasants of the surrounding country by paying them a very high price for the provisions they brought in. He sought out the priests for the purpose of persuading them to reopen and celebrate divine worship within the churches of Moscow, and even to offer up prayers for the legitimate sovereign, the Emperor Alexander. And, for the purpose of soothing in some degree the anxieties of his officers, he reopened the theatres and attended at the dramatic representations, which were formerly the delight of the Russian nobility.



And thus, sometimes full of confidence, sometimes much depressed, he dwelt in the palace of the Czars, at the very solstice of his power, or in other words, at that undetermined period which separates the moment of the greatest elevation of the stars from that of their decline.

## BOOK XLV.

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### THE BEREZINA.

STATE of public feeling in St. Petersburg—Interview at Abo between the Emperor Alexander and the Prince Royal of Sweden—Proposed manœuvres in the rear of the French army—Reinforcement of the troops of Finland sent to the Count de Wittgenstein, and junction of the army of Moldavia with the army of Volhynia under Admiral Tchitchakoff—Orders given to the Russian Generals to advance upon the two French armies guarding the Dwina and the Dnieper, in order to close the line of Napoleon's retreat—General Kutusof directed to decline any species of negotiation, and to renew hostilities as speedily as possible—Napoleon, although having little expectation of peace, delays at Moscow, from a repugnance to a retrograde movement which would degrade him in the eyes of Europe and render negotiations impossible—He inclines to the project of leaving a considerable force in Moscow, and of proceeding with the remainder of the army to take up a position in the rich province of Kalouga, where he might be in communication with Marshal Victor, removed from Smolensk to Jelnia—Whilst Napoleon is in this state of uncertainty, Kutusof, having refreshed and reinforced his army, surprises Murat at Winkowo—Brilliant engagement in which Murat redeems his carelessness by his courage—Napoleon, irritated, marches upon the Russians for the purpose of punishing them for this surprise, and sets out for Moscow, leaving it garrisoned by ten thousand men under Mortier—Departure from Moscow on the 19th of October, after a stay there of thirty-five days—Arrival of the army on the banks of the Pakra—Having reached this point, Napoleon conceives the idea of concealing his march from the Russian army, for the purpose of passing from the old to the new Kalouga route unobserved, and of thus reaching Kalouga without a conflict, and the burden of wounded which must result from it—He gives orders for the execution of this movement, which necessitates the definitive evacuation of Moscow—The Russian army, receiving timely information, advances to Malo-Jaroslavetz, on the new Kalouga route—Desperate and glorious battle of Malo-Jaroslavetz fought by the army of Italy and a portion of the Russian army—Napoleon, believing himself able to penetrate to Kalouga, is anxious to persist in his project, but the fear of a fresh battle, the impossibility of carrying with him nine or ten thousand wounded, and the remonstrances of all his lieutenants determine him to resume the Smolensk route, which the army had already followed on its way to Moscow—A fatal resolution—First rains and difficulties of the road—Toilsome march upon Mojaisk and Borodino—Dearth consequent on the exhaustion of the provisions brought from Moscow—The

army traverses the field of the battle of the Moskowa—Its melancholy aspect—The Russians pursue us—Difficulties encountered by the vanguard entrusted to Marshal Davoust—Nocturnal surprises by the Cossacks—Destruction of our cavalry—Danger incurred by Prince Eugene and Marshal Davoust in the defile of Czarewo-Zaimiché—Soldiers unable to keep up with the army from want of food and strength to continue their march—Movement of the Russians for the purpose of reaching Wiasma before the French army, whilst a strong rear-guard under Miloradovitch prepares to harass and seize its stragglers—Combat between the French army under Marshal Davoust and the Russians at Wiasma—Marshal Davoust saves himself from a position of great peril by his energy and the aid of Marshal Ney—The first corps, exhausted by the fatigues and difficulties it had had to encounter, is replaced by the third corps under Marshal Ney, thenceforth entrusted with the task of covering the retreat—Sudden cold, and the commencement of cruel sufferings by the army—Loss of horses, and the abandonment of a portion of the gun-carriages—Arrival at Dorogobouge—Napoleon's despondency and inactivity during the retreat—Information received by him of the movement executed by the Russians on his line of communication, and the conspiracy of Malet at Paris—Origin and details of this conspiracy—Precipitate march of Napoleon upon Smolensk—Disaster suffered by Prince Eugene at the passage of the Vop during the march of the prince upon Witebsk—He rejoins the grand army at Smolensk—Napoleon learning at Smolensk that Marshal St. Cyr has been obliged to evacuate Polotsk, and that the Prince of Schwarzenberg and General Reynier have permitted themselves to be deceived by Tchitchakoff, who is advancing upon Minsk, hastens to reach the Berezina, in order to escape the danger of being surrounded—Departure of the French army in three columns, and encounter with the Russian army at Krasnoé—Three days of conflict around Krasnoé, and separation of Ney's corps—Extraordinary march of this corps for the purpose of rejoining the army—Napoleon's arrival at Orscha—He learns that Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein are about to effect a junction on the Berezina and to cut him off from every means of retreat—He hastens to reach the bank of this river—Serious deliberation respecting the point at which to effect its passage—At the moment when it appears impossible to find a suitable one, General Corbineau arrives, pursued by the Russians, and discovers at Studianka a point at which it is possible to effect the passage of the Berezina—All the efforts of the army directed upon this point—Praiseworthy devotion displayed by General Eblé, and the corps of pontonniers—The army employs three days in effecting the passage of the Berezina, and during these three days combats with the enemy both in front and rear—Napoleon's energy and manifestation of genius in this moment of peril—Heroic struggle and terrible scene at the bridges—The army miraculously saved, proceeds to Smorgoni—Having arrived at this place, Napoleon, after deliberation on the advantages and disadvantages attending such a step, determines to quit the army clandestinely for the purpose of returning to Paris—He sets out on the 3rd of December, accompanied by M. de Coulaincourt, Marshal Duroc, Count de Lobau, and General Lefebvre-Desnouettes—After Napoleon's departure, its disorganisation and the sudden increase of the cold complete the destruction of the army—Evacuation of Wilna and arrival of the staffs at Königsberg without a soldier—Characteristics and results of the campaign of 1812—The real causes of its terrible disasters.

## BOOK XLV.

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WHILST the course of events proceeded as above narrated at Moscow, the Emperor Alexander, having withdrawn to St. Petersburg, devoted his days and nights to the conduct of the war, although he had renounced the direction of the actual operations of the army on the field; occupying himself with the general management of the campaign, with providing the necessary supplies, and extending the circle of his alliances.

As has been already narrated, he had refused to treat with the English until the moment of his final rupture with the French, but after the departure from Wilna and the return of Balachoff, he had no longer hesitated, and, the Prince Royal of Sweden conducting the negotiation, on the 18th of July peace had been signed between Russia and Great Britain, on the simple and brief condition of an alliance offensive and defensive, the manner in which this condition was to be carried out being left to circumstances. Immediately after the signature of peace, Lord Cathcart had hastened to St. Petersburg to be the English representative there; and under the auspices of this ambassador had been arranged an interview, which was the object of the most eager desires of the Prince Royal of Sweden, since it would afford him the opportunity of receiving the Imperial confidence, and the Imperial assurance that he should be maintained on the Swedish throne and be gratified by the acquisition of Norway. It greatly hurt Alexander's pride to hold an interview with such an ally as Bernadotte, but as it was of great importance to him to secure the co-operation of the Swedish armies, he had consented to meet the Swedish Prince Royal at Abo, the point of Finland nearest to the Swedish boundary; and on the 28th of August it had, accordingly, taken place there, in the presence of Lord Cathcart. Alexander took care on this occasion to make his Russian pride bend to the exigencies of the moment, and as the reward for his condescension persuaded the new Prince to consent to all the arrangements which



Russia desired. It was decided that the Russian corps at that time retained in Finland under pretence of assisting Sweden in obtaining Norway, should be sent to the Dwina, and that the Swedish army should be reserved to be thrown upon some point on the French rear ; that the whole strength of the allies, in short, should be employed in combatting Napoleon, this being the essential object of the war, and the most certain means of securing to the future king of Sweden the possession of Norway. These arrangements having been made, the Prince Royal had then given advice to the Emperor Alexander which was as serviceable to him as injurious to us, and was expressed in terms of the most bitter enmity. Napoleon, he said, was not the profound military genius he was generally supposed, but was merely an impetuous leader who knew how to advance but not how to retreat, and might readily be vanquished by perseverance. After the Russians had lost one, two, or three battles, he continued, they would begin to fight drawn battles, and from doubtful engagements would proceed to victories.

Whilst Alexander was entering into these arrangements with Sweden, he had concluded peace with the Porte, on terms somewhat different from those which he had originally flattered himself that he would be able to obtain. After having successively desisted from his demands for Wallachia, for Moldavia as far as the Sereth, and finally for Moldavia altogether, he had finally persisted only in claiming Bessarabia, for the purpose of acquiring at least the mouths of the Danube, and on the alliance of the Turks, indulging in the chimerical idea of inducing them to invade the Illyrian Provinces, perhaps even Italy, in concert with a Russian army. The Turks weary of the war, and weary also of their relations with the European powers, had imprudently consented to yield up Bessarabia, which a few days' patience would have secured to them, but had resolutely refused to enter into any species of alliance with Russia. The treaty of peace, already signed, remained unconcluded only from this cause ; and Admiral Tchitchakoff, finding himself frustrated in the hope of invading the French empire in company with the Turks, had devised the contrary plan of invading the Turkish empire itself, and had proposed to Alexander to march directly upon Constantinople for the purpose of seizing it ; hoping that, habituated as the world then was to the overthrow of Italy, this magnificent conquest might be secured to Russia by the arrangements of the next peace. When this proposition was first submitted to Alexander it greatly excited him, and he was on the point of giving orders for carrying it into execution. But fearing, on reflection, that such an

action might displease, and even alienate, not only his declared allies, England and Sweden, but even his secret allies, Prussia and Austria, by laying violent hands on Constantinople, considering the difficulty of marching upon this capital with, at the most, fifty thousand men, the imprudence which he would be committing in invading another country when the invader was actually in his own, and the great advantage which might result from moving these fifty thousand men in conjunction with the thirty thousand under Tormazoff, upon the flanks of the French army, he had restrained his rash friend, Admiral Tchitchakoff, recommending him to defer his designs upon Constantinople and to march immediately upon Volhynia.

Such were the political arrangements which had been made by Alexander with those able to assist him, and with those possessing the power to injure him. On his return to St. Petersburg from the conference at Abo, he had received the news of the battle of Moskowa, and having at first regarded it as a victory, had sent a Marshal's bâton to Prince Kutusof, together with one hundred thousand roubles for himself, and five roubles for each soldier of the army, and ordered that thanksgivings should be offered up in all the churches of the empire. But he had speedily discovered the truth, and was indignant at the impudence of his commander-in-chief, although he did not dare to resent a lie which supported the spirits of his subjects. On receiving news of the capture of Moscow and the catastrophe which had overwhelmed it, he had experienced the most profound emotion; and the impression produced by this event had, indeed, been immense throughout the whole empire, especially in St. Petersburg, where it produced as much consternation as distress.

St. Petersburg, the artificial production of Peter the Great, the seat of government officials, of courtiers, of merchants, of foreigners, was not as Moscow was, the very heart of Russia, but was rather its head. At first it had desired war, regarding it only as a means of obtaining the renewal of commercial relations with Great Britain; but now that it had seen how long was the train it had brought with it, of sacrifices and dangers, it was far less eager for hostilities. It began to complain of the evils of the system of indefinite retreat, to accuse the Russian Generals of treason or of negligence, and the Emperor himself of weakness, and to seek relief for its terror in the use of the most bitter and violent language. General Pfful could not appear in the streets without running the risk of being insulted; whilst General Paulucci, who was generally

regarded as the representative of opposite views, was received with the most cordial demonstrations of favour.

The idea that Napoleon would immediately march from Moscow to St. Petersburg universally prevailed, and preparations for departure were already commenced. In the meantime, the bolder spirits who desired war to the death, did not hesitate to declare that if Alexander should weakly hesitate it would be necessary to depose him, and to summon to the throne the Grand Duchess Catherine—his sister, and wife of the Prince of Oldenburg, whose patrimony Napoleon had seized—a princess of much beauty and spirit, reputed to be very hostile to the French, and residing at this period with her husband, governor of the provinces of Jwer, Jaroslawa, and Kostroma. The moderate party, on the other hand, was anxious that negotiations for peace should be at once entered upon, being terrified at the idea of seeing the French in St. Petersburg, the Emperor flying towards Finland or Archangel. The Empress mother, proud and hostile to the French as she was, had begun to grow timid and to entertain a desire for peace as well as the Grand Duke Constantine, who had quitted the army since the loss of Smolensk, and who was opposed to the plan of carrying on in Russia a war to the death such as the Spaniards had carried on against the French during the last four years. But the timid expostulations of the advocates for peace, amongst whom was now, strange to relate, M. Arckhtchejef himself, formerly one of the most eager partisans of the war party, were completely overpowered by the fury of those who demanded a war to the death.

In the meantime, Alexander, profoundly distressed by the destruction of Moscow, and by no means certain that he would be able to defend St. Petersburg, might have yielded to the dictates of his despondency had not his wounded pride supported him. To yield still further to the imperious ally of Tilsit and Erfurt by whom he had been so disdainfully treated, was a humiliation to which his pride made death seem preferable; and he declared to his intimate associates that he and Napoleon could no longer reign together in Europe; that it was necessary that one or the other should retire from the world's stage. Weary of the chaos of discordant opinions which surrounded him, he had secretly taken the resolution never to yield, and proceeded to take measures which seemed proper to support such a resolution.

As the Russian fleet of Cronstadt would soon become enclosed in the ice, and thus become exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of the French, he determined upon the painful sacrifice of entrusting it to the English; and



having informed Lord Cathcart of his fears respecting its safety, declared that he confided it to the honour and good-faith of Great Britain. The English Ambassador, delighted at such a proposal, promised that the deposit should be faithfully guarded, and that the Russian fleet should be received with the most cordial hospitality in the English ports. Alexander, accordingly, having stored in it his most valuable possessions, had the fleet moved towards the Great Belt, in order that it might be able to leave the Baltic at the first signal, under the protection of the British flag. At the same time, much property belonging to the crown, especially the state papers, was conveyed to Archangel.

These precautions having been taken, Alexander proceeded to carry out measures, the probable effect of which would be either victory or defeat. He made arrangements with Sweden relative to the despatch to Livonia of the corps d'armée of General Steinghel, which had hitherto been retained at Finland, and, renouncing the attractive but dangerous plans of Admiral Tchitchakoff, ordered him to march upon Volhynia, to incorporate there with his own army the troops under General Tormazoff, and with the seventy thousand men who would thus be placed at his disposal to ascend the Dnieper for the purpose of concurring in a concentric movement, which had been planned, of the Russian armies on Napoleon's rear. Amongst the ideas suggested to him by General Pfuhl, was one which had particularly struck Alexander, and was that of operating on the flanks and rear of the French army, when it should have been enticed into the interior of the empire. And now that the French army was at Moscow was the time, if ever, to advance upon its line of communication, for the troops left in the rear had nowhere acquired a decided ascendant, and if Count Wittgenstein, after receiving large reinforcements, could succeed in driving back Marshal St. Cyr from the Dwina, and in advancing himself between Witebsk and Smolensk, whilst Admiral Tchitchakoff, leaving a corps to hold in check the Prince of Schwarzenberg, should ascend the Dnieper and the Berezina for the purpose of acting in concert with Wittgenstein, these two commanders might effect a junction on the upper Berezina, and there meet the French troops as they returned from Moscow, exhausted by a long march, and harassed by Kutusof.

Induced to adopt this plan by his interviews with General Pfuhl, and encouraged to persevere in them by his aide-de-camp Michaud, Alexander directed M. de Czernicheff to proceed in succession to Prince Kutusof, Admiral Tchitchakoff, and Count Witgenstein, for the purpose of inducing



them to concur in its execution. And being occupied, therefore, in such views as these, it was not probable that Alexander would make a favorable answer to Napoleon's overtures, which caused him much satisfaction, as a proof of the embarrassments which the French had begun to experience in the midst of Moscow, and which presaged, not only the safety but also the triumph of Russia. As, however, it was of importance to retain Napoleon in Moscow as long as possible, Alexander determined to delay his answer to those overtures, without allowing the enemy to suspect what would be its character.

In the meantime, Napoleon awaited the response to his overtures in the moral agitation of uncertainty, sometimes indulging in expectations of peace, but at length, when Alexander still continued silent long after he must have received the overtures made through MM. Toutelmine and Jakowleff, despairing of this result, and declaring that it was necessary to adopt decisive measures. The weather was extraordinarily fine, and equalled in clearness and mildness any autumn that had ever brooded in September on the plains of Fontainebleau and Compiègne. But in proportion to the present fineness of the weather would be the rapidity of the complete change which it must soon undergo, and the more necessary was it to make immediate preparations for the retreat. The troops of the army were thoroughly refreshed by the repose and the abundance which they had enjoyed, and were full of health and confidence; and it now numbered one hundred thousand effective soldiers of all arms actually present, and possessed six hundred pieces of cannon, well provided with ammunition. The whole state of the army was, indeed, thoroughly satisfactory, with the exception of its deficiency in the means of transport; for whilst the men were strong and healthy, the horses, but very meagrely supplied with forage, were thin and feeble, and in a condition which was a source of the greatest anxiety.

On the 12th of October, a date at which it was impossible that any answer to the communication made to Kutusof on the 5th should have arrived, Napoleon perceived that it was absolutely necessary to take some decided steps, and that he ought, if he intended to remain in Moscow, to drive back the Russians from their cantonments, and if he intended to depart to commence his retreat immediately, before the setting in of unfavourable weather. He had already ordered the departure of all the wounded capable of being removed, and given directions that everything should be in readiness at Smolensk to assist the progress of the army in whatever direction he might order. But still he hesitated, withheld

by the reflection that the first backward step which he took would be the commencement of a series of painful and dangerous confessions;—confessions that he had advanced too far, that he was unable to maintain his position at that distance, that he had deceived himself, that he had failed to obtain the object for the sake of which he had entered on the campaign. And what defections, what ideas of rebellion, would there be excited by the spectacle of Napoleon, hitherto invincible, compelled to retreat.

Shrinking from this danger, he constantly brooded over the idea of either passing the winter in Moscow, or of executing a movement which, while it conducted him nearer to his magazines, would have the appearance of being a manœuvre and not a retreat. The plan of passing the winter in Moscow was one of singular audacity, and was not without its partisans, the chief of whom was a man whose opinion deserved the greatest respect, and who was M. Darn, accompanying Napoleon as secretary of state, and in this character charged with all the details of the management of the army. This eminent administrator considered that it would be easier to feed the army in Moscow, and to secure its communications whilst it remained there, than to convey it safely and in good condition to Smolensk, by an unknown route, should a new one be adopted, or a devastated one, should it retrace the path by which it had advanced. The great difficulty was not how to find the means of subsistence, for the army possessed, as has already been observed, great stores of corn, rice, vegetables, spirituous liquors, and salted provisions; but how to provide forage for the horses, which were dying of inanition, and for whom it was found scarcely possible to provide food even at a season which was far from being the least favourable of the year. But even if this difficulty could be overcome, there remained the no less serious difficulty of maintaining the communications between the posts on the route from Smolensk to Moscow, for which purpose it would be necessary to convert each post into a fortress, and to garrison them with forces which would necessarily amount in the aggregate to twelve or fifteen thousand men, without taking into consideration those which would be necessary at Dorogobouge, Wiasma, Ghat, Mojaïsk, and many other places of less importance, but which it would, nevertheless, be necessary to defend. And what would happen in Paris—what would take place in Europe, if, in spite of all the care which might be taken to keep open the communications, there should some day be no news of Napoleon, and if he should be separated from the empire as Masséna had been during the campaign in Portugal? And,

finally, supposing that all these difficulties should be successfully overcome, what advantage, it was asked, would the French have gained by being at the commencement of the succeeding spring in Moscow? In Moscow, which was one hundred and eighty leagues from St. Petersburg—one hundred and eighty leagues of the most difficult road, without taking into account the one hundred leagues between Smolensk and Moscow, and which would raise the number of leagues to be traversed by the reinforcements which the grand army would require when about to march for St. Petersburg, to two hundred and eighty leagues; whilst, if it took up a position at Witebsk, the distance which would thus have to be traversed would only be one hundred and fifty leagues.

But although there were, therefore, such serious objections to the plan of passing the winter in Moscow, Napoleon was so averse to making a retrograde step that he would not entirely resign this plan, and, whilst he sent away the wounded so that they might not encumber his movements, he fortified the Kremlin and brought up reinforcements for the army.

In the meantime Napoleon's real inclinations pointed towards the execution of that finely conceived manœuvre, which, whilst it carried him towards Poland by an oblique march towards the north, would have placed him behind the Duke of Belluna at Veliki-Luki, and would have made him appear not as in retreat, but as accomplishing an offensive movement against Saint Petersburg. But, unfortunately, each succeeding day found the army more adverse to any movement northwards; and in the meantime, by the news from the south, it appeared that whilst the French forces remained inert, Admiral Tchitchakoff returning from Turkey after the signature of peace with the Turks, had traversed Podolia and Volhynia, and the neutrality of Galicia having been secured by secret agreement with Austria, had penetrated as far as the bank of the Styr for the purpose of reinforcing Tormazoff; and that then having assumed the command of the united forces, which numbered sixty thousand men, he had compelled Schwarzenberg and Reynier, whose combined troops amounted to no more than thirty-six thousand, to fall back upon the Bug, and behind the Pinsk marshes, for the purpose of covering the Grand Duchy. Warsaw was once more filled with alarm, and exclamations that Napoleon had abandoned Poland, and complaints that he had not incorporated Lithuania with it, were made excuses for taking no active steps towards either sending recruits or matériel to Prince Poniatowski.

This being the state of affairs, and a movement to the



north, therefore, most objectionable; Napoleon devised a mixed combination, consisting in an advance upon the Taroutino camp, driving back Kutusof either to the right or the left, then advancing upon Kalouga, drawing thither the forces under the Duke of Belluna by the Jelniaroute, or at least, a strong division already at Smolensk, and thus taking up his winter quarters at Kalouga, in the midst of a fertile country, in a somewhat less rigorous climate, in communication by his right with Smolensk, and by his rear with Moscow. At the same time he proposed to guard the Kremlin by leaving there Marshal Mortier with four thousand men of the young guard, four thousand men of the dismounted cavalry converted into battalions of infantry, with six months provisions, and to deposit there the heaviest portion of his matériel, his wounded, sick, and stragglers.

This plan, the execution of which would have been so far from bearing any resemblance to a retreat, that it would, on the contrary, have carried the French army into new provinces, which were the finest and the most central of all Russia, was not the one which Napoleon preferred, but was the one which appeared the most suitable in the existing position of affairs. A slight frost having occurred on the 13th of October, whilst the weather still remained as fine as before, it was universally declared that the moment had come when it was necessary to decide. Napoleon assembled his marshals for the purpose of receiving their advice, and Prince Eugene, Major-General Berthier, Darn, the minister of state, Marshals Mortier, Davoust, and Ney obeyed his summons; Murat and Bessières being absent, because compelled to be present before the Taroutino camp. The first question discussed by the council was the state of each corps, and the second, what plan of operations it would be most wise to adopt. The consideration of the state of the corps could not but be productive of sadness, for that of Marshal Davoust was reduced from seventy-two thousand to twenty-nine or thirty thousand; that of Marshal Ney, from thirty-nine thousand to ten or eleven thousand; whilst Prince Poniatowski's troops numbered no more than five thousand, the Westphalian two thousand, and the guard, which had not been in action, twenty-two thousand. In fact, inclusive of the engineer and artillery troops, the army which on its passage of the Niemen had numbered four hundred and twenty thousand men, and on its departure from Witebsk one hundred and seventy-five thousand, was now reduced to but little more than a hundred thousand. At the same time, however, the condition of the men was satisfactory, and they were full of courage, although rendered somewhat uneasy by the hazardous nature of the position which they occupied.



With respect to the plan of operations to be adopted there was much diversity of opinion ; Marshal Davoust expressing himself strongly in favour of the Kalouga route, and intimating very plainly his opinion that the army had already delayed too long at Moscow, whilst Major-General Berthier, accustomed to make his opinions conform to those of Napoleon, and conscious of the preference of the Emperor for the northern route, proposed that the return should be upon Witebsk, the line of march lying laterally to the Smolensk route, by Woskresensk, Woloklamsk, Zubkow, Bieloi. Marshal Mortier, loyal and submissive, concurred in this opinion, whilst Ney, on the contrary, giving way to his natural roughness and indocility, reiterated Marshal Davoust's opinion that the army had already delayed too long at Moscow. Prince Eugene, too timid to maintain any opinion contrary to that of the staff as represented by Berthier, acquiesced in the views supported by the latter ; and M. Darn, putting forward an independent opinion, declared that the army ought to remain at Moscow during the winter ; since, he maintained, provisions of all sorts could be obtained then in sufficient abundance, and the adoption of this plan would relieve the army from the double inconvenience of a retreat, and a movement across districts which were either unknown or devastated, at an advanced period of the year.

When Napoleon sought the counsels of others he usually received them without remark, reserving his own opinion ; and the perplexities in which he was involved were sufficient cause for his silence on this occasion. He was most anxious to remain, but he perceived the difficulty there would be, should he adopt that measure, in obtaining provisions for the army, and maintaining his communications, and at the same time, the approach of the bad season and the appearance of Admiral Tchitchakoff upon the Lower Dnieper, were forcible arguments against a movement northwards, and in favour of the plan of marching upon Kalouga, establishing the army in winter-quarters in this rich province, leaving a garrison at the Kremlin, and posting the Duke of Belluna at Jelnia, for the purpose of maintaining communications with Smolensk. This plan, therefore, was the one finally selected, but still the vague hope of receiving some answer from Saint Petersburg, the difficulty attending the evacuation on account of the want of waggons, the fineness of the weather, and the natural repugnance to commence a retrograde movement, caused a further delay of four or five days, and the final orders were about to be given directing the march upon Kalouga,

when on the 18th of October a sudden and serious occurrence caused the most unfortunate delay.

On the morning of the 18th, in fact, as Napoleon was reviewing Marshal Ney's corps, the firing of cannon was heard from the south, in the direction of the Kalouga route, and almost immediately afterwards information arrived that Murat, who had relied on the assurance given by the Russians that they would give him some hours' warning before recommencing hostilities, had been surprised and attacked that morning by the whole Russian army, and although he had extricated himself from his peril by means of courage and good fortune, that yet he had only succeeded in doing so with the loss of men and cannon.

Although Kutusof, whose army was now raised by the arrival of reinforcements to eighty thousand infantry and regular cavalry, and twenty thousand Cossacks, had determined to risk nothing against such an enemy as Napoleon, and only to attack him when he should have already been three parts vanquished by the climate, the position occupied by Murat was well calculated to induce him to break this resolution. Situated in the midst of a great plain, behind the Czerniczna ravine, Murat had his right covered by the deepest portion of this ravine which fell into the Nara, but his left was unprotected, since the ravine in that direction was not of sufficient depth to be a defence against an enemy's attacks. By taking advantage of a wood which extended between the two camps, and which would serve to screen its movements, the Russian army could easily debouch on Murat's left, turn him, cut him off from Woronowo, and might possibly succeed in destroying his corps, which comprised, besides Poniatowski's infantry, almost the whole French cavalry.

The ardent Colonel Toll had reconnoitred this position in concert with General Benningsen, and induced Kutusof to consent to the execution of a bold *coup de main*, the success of which would, he declared, so greatly enfeeble the French army that it would immediately sink into a great numerical inferiority to that of Russia. On the evening of the 17th of October, therefore, General Orloff-Denisoff, with a great mass of cavalry and many regiments of foot chasseurs, and General Bagowouth with his whole infantry, received orders to advance secretly across the wood which lay between the two camps, and to debouch suddenly upon the French left, whilst the bulk of the Russian army marched directly upon Winkowo.

This manœuvre had been executed during the night of the 17th, and on the morning of the 18th General Sebastiani had found himself suddenly attacked, and being unpre-

pared for such a movement on the part of the enemy, lost some pieces of cannon, several hundreds of men taken prisoners by the enemy, and a considerable quantity of baggage. But nevertheless, by means of prodigies of valour, in the course of which he dispersed Orloff-Denisoff's cavalry and sabred four battalions of infantry, and by means also of ill-judged tactics on the part of the Russians, Murat succeeded in falling back in safety upon Woronowo, as much a conqueror as vanquished, and in possession of the Moscow route. He had lost about fifteen hundred men, whilst the loss on the side of the Russians was about two thousand.

On receiving this information. Napoleon was excessively irritated on account of the carelessness of Murat and his lieutenants on the one hand, and the breach of good faith displayed by the Russians on the other.

At the same time he saw that the best means of chastising the latter would be to put into execution the proposed march upon the Kalouga route ; and he, accordingly, immediately ordered Prince Eugene, Marshals Ney and Davoust, and the guard, to prepare during the afternoon of the 18th of October for departure on the following morning. Being unwilling to resign possession of Moscow, he directed Marshal Mortier to establish himself there with ten thousand men ; and placed such of the wounded as were incapable of being removed, in the foundling hospital, under the care of the worthy General Toutelmine. He gave orders also to General Junot to hold himself in readiness to quit Mojaïsk at any moment, for the purpose of marching upon Smolensk, to the governor of which place he wrote, directing him to throw upon Jelnia a division which had been formed of the troops de marche under General Baraguey-d'Hilliers, and ordered the Duke of Belluna to prepare to follow it. He took all those preliminary measures, in short, which would be necessary whether he should execute a simple movement upon Kalouga, retaining possession of Moscow, or a definitive retreat upon Witebsk and Smolensk.

On the morning of the 19th of October, the first day of this retreat which was to be ever memorable for the misery and the heroism by which it was to be signalized, the corps under Prince Eugene commanded the movement of the army, followed successively by those of Marshals Davoust and Ney, and the Imperial guard. The cavalry under Murat, the Poles under Prince Poniatowski, a division of Marshal Davoust's corps under General Fredericks, were at Woronowo, in front of the Russian rear guard ; and General Broussier's division of Prince Eugene's corps had for some days past occupied a position on the new Kalouga route,



which passed between the old Kalouga route, now followed by the bulk of the army, and that of Smolensk.

The rear of the retreating army presented a strange spectacle, for after the immense mass of ammunition which had been provided for the abundant supply of six hundred cannon by which the army was accompanied, came a vast quantity of baggage such as had never been seen in motion since the barbarous ages when, over the whole surface of Europe, entire populations were wont to displace themselves for the purpose of seeking new territories.

The waggons of the country filled with prisoners, and the spoils rescued from the flames of Moscow followed each regiment, each battalion, and in the wake of the army moved a species of deplorable colony, composed of the French, Italian, and German families, which had dared to remain with us in Moscow, but feared to await the return of the Russians and had demanded permission to accompany us.

This strange and immense appendage to the army was a source of considerable anxiety and even alarm, for how, it was asked, would it be possible for the army to manœuvre, when burdened by such an incumbrance; and how, moreover, to resist the attacks of the Cossacks. Bound by these considerations, Napoleon was strongly inclined to give orders which would relieve the army from this source of embarrassment; but on reflection it occurred to him, that the accidents which would occur on the line of march, and the daily consumption of provisions, would speedily reduce the mass of baggage to more moderate dimensions, and that it was unnecessary, therefore, to distress its proprietors by rigorous regulations.

The army occupied the whole of the 19th in effecting its departure from Moscow, and had not, at the most, proceeded on its march more than three or four leagues on that day; but on the following day, the 20th, the weather still continuing fine, it was enabled by means of a forced march, to encamp between the Desna and the Pakra. Napoleon, who had remained at Moscow during the 19th for the purpose of superintending the evacuation, set out on the morning of the 20th, and having speedily arrived at the château de Troitskoié, there formed a sudden resolution of the utmost importance. He had set out from Moscow, not with the idea of beating a retreat, but with the intention of punishing the enemy for the manner in which he had surprised our troops at Winkowo, of driving him back beyond Kalouga, and taking up a position in this city, communicating on the one hand with the troops marched from Smolensk upon Jelnia, and on the other, with Marshal Mortier, who had been left at the



Kremlin. But as soon as he had glanced at the enemy's position he modified his plan with the most admirable promptitude. The fact was that there were two routes by which he could reach Kalouga; the one to the right, parallel to that of Smolensk, called the new route, passing by Scherapowo, Fominskoïé, Borowsk, and Malo-Jaroslavetz, entirely free from the enemy, occupied by the division Broussier, and for the most part passing through countries which had not been devastated; the other, that which the French army was actually following, passing by Desna, Gorki, Woronowo, Winkowo, and Taroutino, in the possession of the Russians, who had established themselves upon it in a camp which had been carefully constructed; and the brilliant manœuvre which Napoleon now suddenly devised, was to avoid an engagement with the enemy, which would probably cost him twelve or fifteen thousand men, by secretly defiling in front of the Russian army, concealing the movement by making a sudden *détour* to the right, which would carry the army from the old Kalouga route to the new, and place it out of danger of attack from the enemy. But whilst the adoption of this plan would enable the French army to recover its endangered communications, and conduct it to the most fertile district it could possibly find in these regions at this season, it would involve the necessity of definitively abandoning Moscow, for should it adopt the plan of avoiding, instead of engaging and vanquishing the Russians, and leave them between itself and Moscow, unvanquished, and a hundred thousand strong, it would be unable to maintain Marshal Mortier in his position in the Kremlin, since it could not, in this case, send him aid. Napoleon, therefore, determining upon his line of action with all the promptitude of a great captain, immediately sent orders to Marshal Mortier to evacuate the Kremlin, to destroy it by means of mines which had been already prepared, and to rejoin the army by the Wereja route. At the same time he sent orders to Junot to evacuate Mojaïsk with the last columns of the wounded by the Smolensk route, which the army was about to cover by its presence on the new Kalouga route.

These orders having been despatched relative to the evacuation of Moscow, Napoleon devoted his attention to the movement from left to right, which he had determined that the army should execute for the purpose of proceeding from the old Kalouga route to the new. He planned that the army should make this movement by the road running from Gorki to Fominskoïé by Ignatowo, and ordered Prince Eugene, a portion of whose cavalry and the division Broussier were already at Fominskoïé, to make the first advance in

this new direction, Marshal Davoust to follow him, and the guard to follow Davoust. Marshal Ney, who remained at Gorki with his corps, with the Polish division Claparède and a portion of the light cavalry, was to replace Murat in front of Woronowo, to render himself conspicuous before the Russian advanced posts, and to make demonstrations in the neighbourhood of Podolsk, continuing this species of comedy until the evening of the 23rd, so as to deceive the Russians as long as possible and thus allow time for the passage of our baggage; and then was to carry his own troops from the old Kalouga route to the new by forced marches, reaching Malo-Jaroslawetz by the 25th.

The chief obstacle to the successful execution of this brilliant manœuvre consisted in the enormous bulk of the masses of men and baggage which would have to be moved. With such an army as Napoleon had commanded in Italy, or such an one as that led by General Moreau in Germany, such a movement as that which Napoleon had now devised would have been successfully executed and formed one of the most illustrious claims to glory of him who had conceived it; but the circumstances under which Napoleon had to attempt it were such as to render its execution a matter of extreme difficulty.

Having in this strange manner, then, and in a sudden moment of inspiration, as it were, resolved to beat a retreat and to evacuate Moscow, Napoleon passed the day between Troitskoié and Krasnoé-Pakra, for the purpose of personally assisting in ordering the defiling of the army, which continued to present a spectacle as extraordinary as it was a subject of anxiety, by reason of the burdens which encumbered its rear, and which, at every ravine, at every little bridge, at every village, caused a deplorable delay which gave ample intimation of the terrible consequences which might be expected to ensue when the army should be pursued by the enemy's innumerable light cavalry.

Prince Eugene's corps having been fatigued by the long march which it had executed on the 21st from Gorki to Fominskoié, it had been permitted to halt during the 22nd for the purpose of reposing and bringing up its baggage and being strengthened by the addition of Marshal Davoust's five divisions, which would raise its force to fifty thousand of the best infantry in the world. On the same day Napoleon himself proceeded from Ignatowo, where he had passed the night of the 21st, to Fominskoié, and carried Prince Poniatowski's troops somewhat more to the right, for the purpose of forming a closer communication with the Smolensk route, by which was to be effected the removal of

the wounded and the matériel under the care of General Junot.

On the 23rd Prince Eugene reached Barowsk, and but a step was wanting to complete the execution of the manœuvre which Napoleon had planned on the evening of the 20th, for at Barowsk we were on the new Kalouga route. This little town was situated beyond a river named the Lougea, and by Napoleon's orders Prince Eugene sent forward General Delzons from Barowsk, which had been reached at an early hour, for the purpose of arriving at Malo-Jaroslavetz the same day.

In the meantime the Russian army remained with singular carelessness at its camp at Taroutino, perfectly unconscious of the humiliation which was being prepared for it, and supposing only that Napoleon intended to attack and carry Taroutino in revenge for the surprise at Winkowo. Nevertheless, the light troops of General Doctoroff having given intimation of the presence at Fominskoié of Broussière's division, which had been during some days past in occupation of the new Kalouga route, Kutusof imagined that the purpose of this division was to connect the main body of the French army, which was now distinctly visible on the old Kalouga route, with the troops which pursued the Smolensk route, and he resolved to seize it, considering it to be in a position very open to his attack. He entrusted the execution of the proposed measure to General Doctoroff, but the latter having advanced as far as Aristowo on the 22nd, believed that he had discovered before him something more considerable than a simple division; and as information, moreover, reached Kutusof on the morning of the 23rd, that French troops had been observed executing a transverse movement from Krasnoé-Pakra to Fominskoié, it became evident to the Russian General that Napoleon had abandoned the old Kalouga route for the purpose of reaching the new, and turning the Taroutino camp. To stop Napoleon at Barowsk, was not, therefore, any longer possible, and the only chance which the Russians now had of barring his road was by advancing to Malo-Jaroslavetz, behind the Lougea. Kutusof, therefore, ordered Doctoroff to proceed thither with the utmost despatch, and at the same time made the most strenuous exertions to assemble his army so as to be able to direct it by way of Letachewa, upon Malo-Jaroslavetz, the possession of which, it appeared probable, would decide the campaign.

On the 24th, General Doctoroff having passed the Protwa, a river into which falls the Lougea, below Malo-Jaroslavetz, arrived at day-break in front of Malo-Jaroslavetz itself, which



is situated on the heights, at the foot of which flows the Lougea, through a marshy channel. The French, coming from Moscow, had to cross the Lougea, then to climb the heights, and to maintain their ground in Malo-Jaroslawetz, whilst the Russians, marching by their left on the other side of the river, had to throw themselves into the town, and to drive us out of it, hurling us from the heights into the bed of the Lougea beneath them. At five o'clock on the morning of the 24th of October, the Russians commenced the attack, bringing up eleven or twelve thousand men against the five or six thousand under Delzons, and by means of this superiority succeeding in compelling the latter to give way. The brave General Delzons fell sword in hand mortally wounded; and Prince Eugene, sending General Guillemillot, the chief of his staff, to replace him, hastened himself with the division Broussier to retrieve the fortune of the conflict, leaving in reserve on the other side of the Lougea, the division Pino, together with the Italian guard.

The division Broussier penetrating into the town, chased Doctoroff's troops from street to street, and compelled them to fall back upon the plateau; but at this time the corps of General Raeffskoi, preceding the Russian army, arrived at the town, and immediately took part in the furious struggle which the Russians were making to check the French in their desired retreat upon Kalouga, nevertheless the French, although now only ten or eleven thousand against twenty-four thousand enemies, and exposed to a furious fire of artillery, held their ground. The unhappy town, which was soon in flames, was taken and retaken no less than six times, and the combat was carried on in the midst of a conflagration which destroyed the wounded, and calcined their corpses. At length, just as we were about to be finally driven back, the Italian division Pino, which had not hitherto engaged the enemy in this campaign, and which was most eager to distinguish itself, crossed the stream, and climbing the heights, reached the plateau in spite of a furious fire, and debouching on the left of the town, drove back the masses of the Russian infantry, but Raeffskoi's corps speedily attacked it, and, in spite of its firmness, it was in great need of reinforcements, when the chasseurs of the Royal Italian guard hastened up in their turn, and supported it with the utmost valour; and Malo-Jaroslawetz having been retaken for the seventh time by the French with the aid of the Italians, remained in our hands, covered with thousands of corpses and filled with smouldering ruins.



As evening drew on, however, it was by no means certain that the battle was over, or that the disputed point would be left in our hands, for large masses of the Russian army were seen advancing towards it at quick march. Fortunately, however, two of the divisions of the first corps arrived under the command of Marshal Davoust, and with this reinforcement, it was certain that the French would be able to resist all the attempts of the enemy; and in fact, the Russians perceiving the advance of reinforcements resigned all hope of being able again to dislodge us, and fell back somewhat less than a league, leaving in our hands the fearful battlefield, on which lay the corpses of four thousand French and Italians, and six thousand Russians.

Napoleon bivouacked a little in the rear of the Lougea, at the village of Gorodina; convinced that his finely conceived manoeuvre, which would have been successful had he attempted to execute it at the head of less considerable numbers, was no longer possible without fighting a desperate battle, which would probably add ten thousand wounded to the immense encumbrances by which the army was already burdened. He passed the night deliberating on the favourable and unfavourable chances of a determined march upon Kalouga, and early on the morning of the 25th hastened to reconnoitre the position taken up by the Russians. Setting out from the village of Gorodina, surrounded by his principal officers, he had reached the bank of the Lougea, and was about to cross it, when suddenly were heard the tumultuous cries of a number of sutlers flying from a body of about four or five thousand Cossacks, who had passed the Lougea on our right, with a display of that skill in the art of surprise which is so distinguishing a property of these indefatigable savages. The Hetman Platow and the whole Cossack nation were constantly brooding over the idea of effecting the capture of Napoleon, and taking him a prisoner to Moscow; considering that hundreds of millions would not be too great a reward for such a capture; and on this occasion had but one amongst them been acquainted with the features of him with respect to whom they entertained this dream of avidity, it might have been realized. Rushing right and left, they thrust their lances against the imperial group, which fought sword in hand in a close circle around Napoleon, who smiled at the misadventure, when, fortunately, the dragoons of the guard, having perceived the danger, hastened up under the command of the brave lieutenant Dulac, and throwing themselves upon the enemy, sabred some, and drove the remainder beyond the Lougea.

Napoleon affected to consider this incident of no moment, and continued the reconnaissance which he had commenced ; advancing close to the Russian army, which Kutusof had posted behind a strong ravine, thus throwing upon the French, should they venture upon an attack, the inconvenience of fighting with the Lougea behind them. Having carefully and silently studied with his lieutenants the enemy's position, Napoleon repassed the Lougea, and discussed with his staff in a farm of the village of Gorodina the plan of action which it would be most wise to adopt, and on the selection of which depended the fate of the grand army, and consequently that of the empire also.

He laid the question which had to be decided before the generals who were present, and permitted them to express their candid opinions upon it, for the serious state of affairs was incompatible with either reserve or flattery. Would it be better to persevere in the proposed line of march, and to fight another battle for the purpose of opening the way to Kalouga, or simply to fall back by the right upon Mojaisk, in order to regain the grand Smolensk route ? To the former plan there was the great objection, that its adoption would compel the French army to fight a battle, which would probably cost it twenty thousand men, and reduce it to a dangerous equality with the Russian army, besides compelling it either to carry with it or to abandon some ten thousand wounded. But to adopt the latter plan, would on the other hand render it necessary for the French troops to make a march of a hundred leagues across a country which the Russian and French armies had already converted into a desert. A great portion of the provisions brought from Moscow had been consumed in the seven days' march to Malo-Jaroslawetz, and the remainder would certainly be finished during the three days which must still elapse before the army could reach Mojaisk. And thus, should this latter plan be adopted, there would have been uselessly wasted ten days' march and ten days' provisions, which, had the army made use of them, simply in pursuing the Smolensk route, would have enabled it to advance a considerable distance towards this city, or at least to have reached Dorogobouge, where it would have found the convoys sent to meet it.

But although it must ever be the subject of regret that this plan was not adopted, the French army could not and ought not to have ventured to put it into execution. The unanimous opinion of the council which now sat under the roof of an obscure Russian cottage, was in favour of an immediate and direct retreat by Mojaisk and the beaten Smolensk route ; but Marshal Davoust, whilst fully sharing in

the opinion that it was absolutely necessary to renounce the attempt to force a path to Kalouga, nevertheless, proposed the adoption of a line of march which still remained open and which, lying between the new Kalouga route, occupied by Kutusof, and the Smolensk route, filled with desolation, passed by Medouin, Jouknow and Jelnia, across a country which was undevastated and abounded in provisions.

This advice, however, was received very coldly by Davoust's colleagues, who saw safety only in the line of march which led most directly to the Smolensk route, and which was that which lay by Mojaïsk; whilst Napoleon himself inclined neither to the opinion of Davoust nor to that of his other lieutenants, still persisting in thinking that the best plan would be to give the enemy battle, to penetrate to Kalouga, and thus to establish himself victoriously in that fertile province, from which the Russians took so much pains to withhold us. The moral strength resulting from a victory would, Napoleon considered, compensate for the diminution in numbers which must necessarily be one of its consequences. At the same time he could not consider with composure the idea of leaving behind him in agony on the battle field some ten thousand wounded.

Perplexed, agitated, tormented by the opposite views which were presented to his consideration, he knew not on what course to decide, and in this moment of hesitation, with a familiarity which he sometimes permitted himself to display towards his lieutenants, taking hold of the ear of Count Lobau the old General Monton, he demanded of him what he thought of the various courses of action which had been proposed. Count Lobau immediately replied that he considered it most advisable to depart as soon as possible, and by the shortest road, from a country in which the French army had already delayed too long; and the decided manner in which this opinion was expressed seemed to induce Napoleon to adopt the general opinion; but still he deferred making his final decision until the morrow.

In the meantime, Ney, having quitted Gorki during the night of the 23rd, was at this time defiling behind the main body of the army, and was two days' march distant from its head. Rain had suddenly come down during the night of the 23rd, and, softening the roads, had rendered the labours of the horses far beyond their strength. The bivouac was already cold, and everything wore the same sad and sombre aspect.

On the 26th of October, at a very early hour, Napoleon reconnoitred the new position taken up by the Russians, and found them to be making, apparently, a retrograde movement, with the purpose, probably, of taking up a better



position, and one in which they might more advantageously defend the Kalouga route. In the meantime, Prince Poniatowski having, unfortunately, attempted to advance along the Medouin road, the intermediate route which had been pointed out by Marshal Davoust, had experienced there a check which was not likely to recommend the adoption of this line of march; and Napoleon at length resolved to execute a direct retreat by the Smolensk route, and gave the necessary orders for its execution.

The definitive movement in retreat commenced on the 26th of October; and from this moment a feeling of deep despondency prevailed over the whole army, for they could no longer deceive themselves by the idea in which they had hitherto indulged, that they were executing manœuvres and passing through fertile countries for the purpose of reaching more favourable climes; since it was, on the contrary, quite evident that the army was making a compulsory retreat by a route which had already been traversed and on which the troops could only expect to meet with misery.

On the 27th of October the army was on its march from Malo-Jaroslawetz upon Wereja, the guard leading the way, Murat and Ney following the guard, Eugene's corps being next in order, and Davoust's bringing up the rear, and consequently having to encounter the largest share of difficulties and dangers; since it was embarrassed by the mass of baggage which the preceding corps left behind them in their haste to reach their bivouacs, to endure continually the fire of the enemy's artillery and the unceasing incursions of the Cossacks.

For the due performance of the harassing duties which thus fell upon the rear guard it was necessary that the infantry should be assisted by a numerous body of cavalry, but as Davoust found, at the third march, that Grouchy's cavalry was so excessively fatigued that there was danger of its total destruction, he determined to perform the services required of the rear guard with his infantry alone.

And now failure of the means of transport already began to strew the roads not only with baggage, but also with the wounded. For a few days the wounded had been carried on with the army by means of giving up all the baggage waggons to their use, without exception even of those of the staff; but at every step it now became absolutely necessary to leave some behind from the want of means of transport; and Davoust, who, stern and inflexible as he was, was distracted by this cruel necessity, stated his embarrassments to the staff; which, occupying a position at the head of the army, gave too little attention to what was taking place in the rear. In the mean-



time, Napoleon, who had long been accustomed to entrust the execution of details to his lieutenants, who had at this time no great manœuvre to order, and was, moreover, profoundly humiliated by the retreat which could no longer be dissimulated, began to remain perpetually in the midst of his staff, confining himself to the expression of blame directed against Davoust's management of the rear guard, declaring that he was too methodical and marched too slowly; and he added to the difficulties of the rear guard, by ordering, in his irritation against the Russians, the destruction of the villages on the line of march, and thus, as he neglected to confine the performance of this duty to Davoust's corps, deprived the rear guard of food and shelter which it might otherwise have obtained.

Three painful days were thus employed in the march to Mojaïsk, but still the army was full of confidence, for the first difficulties of the retreat had fallen almost exclusively on the rear guard. From Mojaïsk, seven or eight days' march would carry the army to Smolensk; and as the weather, although cold, was still fine, the troops hoped to find at Smolensk, repose, abundance, and good winter quarters.

Marshal Mortier had rejoined the army at Wereja, having, previous to his departure from Moscow, blown up the Kremlin and made an important capture, being that of M. de Wintzingerode, who was a Wurtembergian by birth, and who, having entered the Russian service, commanded a corps of partisans in the environs of Moscow. Believing that the French had departed, he had ventured into the city a little too soon, and had been taken prisoner with one of his aide-de-camps, a young man of the Narishkin family. When these two officers were brought before Napoleon he received M. de Wintzingerode with great sternness, deciding that as he was of the confederation of the Rhine, he was therefore his—Napoleon's—subject, and consequently a rebel, and should be tried by a military commission that he might be treated according to the rigour of the law. He behaved with more gentleness towards the younger prisoner, simply expressing his surprise that a young man of noble family should condescend to serve under one of those mercenaries by which Russia was infested. But Napoleon's officers, who regretted, for the sake of his own dignity and that of the French army, the manner in which he had treated M. de Wintzingerode, showed this officer the utmost civility and kindness.

The army having arrived on the Mojaïsk heights bivouacked on the field of the battle of Borodino, and could not but experience, as it gazed upon it once more, the most painful emotions. In a peopled country a field is soon freed

from the signs of deadly strife, but in this instance the inhabitants of Mojaïsk and the surrounding country having fled, there had been none to remove the fifty thousand corpses, the broken waggons, the dismounted cannon, the innumerable arms and pieces of armour with which the conflict had strewed the ground. The corpses were half devoured by beasts of prey, and swarms of carrion birds filling the air with sinister cries obscured the heavens. The frost which had begun to prevail during the nights had fortunately checked the dangerous exhalations which would have otherwise proceeded from the corpses; but had rather increased than diminished the repulsiveness of their appearance. The reflections inspired by this spectacle were of the most sombre character. How many had been the victims, it was said, and how futile the results! From Wilna to Witebsk, from Witebsk to Smolensk, and still on to Wiasma and Ghjat, had the army hurried for the purpose of engaging the enemy in a decisive battle at Borodino; this battle had at length been fought, and the army had then marched on to Moscow to reap there the fruit of its victory and had found there only a vast conflagration. From thence it had been forced to retreat without having forced the enemy to submission, to retreat without adequate resources, with the certainty of having to pass a painful winter in Poland, and with scarcely any hope of peace, since peace would scarcely be the result of a retreat which was evidently compulsory; and for such results as these had the earth been strewn with fifty thousand corpses!

Anxious that the troops should not be utterly overcome by so melancholy a spectacle, Napoleon ordered that each regiment should stay only during one night at Borodino. The army found there poor General Junot, who was suffering from his wound and still more from the contemptuous treatment he had received during the campaign, and whose troops were now reduced to little more than three thousand from the ten thousand they had numbered at Smolensk, and the fifteen thousand they had numbered at the passage of the Niemen. Whilst the main army was at Moscow he had devoted himself to the care of the wounded in the Kolotskoi Abbey, and had conveyed as many as he was able to Smolensk. There still remained, however, two thousand to be transported thither, and Napoleon, still full of solicitude as he ever was, with respect to the wounded, gave orders that every person, without exception, whether officer, cantinier, or fugitive from Moscow, who possessed any species of vehicle, should undertake the conveyance of a certain number of the wounded. The surgeon—Larrey—

whose goodness of heart knew no bounds, had already hastened forward for the purpose of bestowing on the wounded in the Kolotskoi Abbey, all the resources of his skill. He found there some Russian officers who owed their lives to his care, and when they expressed the extreme gratitude they felt towards him, he demanded of them as the sole recompense he would receive, that they would pledge their honour that when they should themselves be free, they would bestow upon other unfortunates who might then be in their power, such care as they had themselves received from the surgeon-in-chief of the French army. They unanimously gave the required promise, and it is known to God alone whether they paid the debt contracted with the best of men.

The rear guard quitted this frightful spot on the morning of the 31st, and passed the night of that day on the road leading to the little city of Ghjat. The night was extremely cold, and from this time the troops suffered bitterly from the lowness of the temperature. The enemy continued to follow us with regular cavalry, artillery, and swarms of Cossacks under the command of the Hetman Platow. But we saw nothing more of the main body of the Russian army. General Kutusof, since Malo-Jaroslavetz, had been as much perplexed as his adversary had been despondent, for whilst his prudence made him very unwilling to fight murderous battles with an enemy whom exhaustion and the elements would of themselves sooner or later overcome, he was constantly urged by presumptuous and passionate youth, and the English officers present in his camp, to adopt more decisive measures. The day after the conflict at Malo-Jaroslavetz, whilst Napoleon had retreated upon Mojaïsk, he had himself retreated upon Kalouga, as far as a place named Gonzerowo, under pretence of covering the Medouin route, which he might have more securely covered by remaining at Malo-Jaroslavetz, his real object being to avoid a battle.

As soon as he had been informed that Napoleon had reached Mojaïsk, he had determined to follow us, but taking the most northerly road, leading to Witebsk by Woskresensk Wolokolomsk, and Bieloï, he had uselessly pursued us almost to Mojaïsk. Having perceived his error and retraced his steps, he had taken the Medouin and Jouknow route which was parallel with that of Smolensk, and by this route, which was the one proposed by Marshal Davoust, proceeded to flank the march of the French army, to harass it, and, if any favourable opportunity should offer, to inflict upon it some decided check.

After having passed the night between Borodino and



Ghjat, Marshal Davoust proceeded to Ghjat itself. Each succeeding day increased the difficulties attending the retreat, for each day the cold became more intense. He had retained no portion of Grouchy's cavalry, and consequently the infantry, having to fulfil all the services required of the rear guard, had to perform the duties proper to the various arms of the service, and veterans as they were, they did perform them; sometimes checking the charge of the enemy's cavalry with their bayonets, sometimes rushing upon his artillery and taking possession of it, although they were soon forced to leave it on the road on account of the want of the means of transport, the same want gradually compelling us to destroy our own munitions, and to abandon the wounded.

This latter necessity, which was much aggravated by the cruel selfishness of the owners of the waggons to which the wounded had been entrusted, these persons frequently under cover of the night casting the helpless wretches on the road, was a constant source of distress, and had a most disastrous effect on all but the veteran troops. Murmurs arose that devotion on the part of the soldier was an absurdity, and large numbers of men leaving their ranks under various pretexts, joined that daily increasing and miscellaneous crowd which followed in the wake of the army, subsisting as it could, and which increased to an immense degree the labours of the rear guard.

On approaching Ghjat on the evening of the 31st of October, Marshal Davoust had been anxious to send out columns of infantry, as he had no cavalry, to the right and the left, for the purpose of obtaining provisions for the 1st corps and the famished crowd which followed it, but the enemy's cavalry appeared in such force on our flank and rear that it was absolutely necessary to renounce this prudent intention and to trust to chance for the means of subsistence.

Quitting Ghjat on the 1st of November, the Marshal knew that at the village of Czarewo-Zaimitché would be found a difficult defile, at which would arise a great amount of confusion, since it would be necessary to cross a little stream bordered on each side by marshes which could only be passed by a single narrow path. Foreseeing this difficulty, Davoust had written to Prince Eugene intreating him to hasten his march, and promising, on his own part, to delay as long as possible; but in spite of these precautions Prince Eugene's corps had fallen into the greatest confusion at the passage of this defile, and the bridge had broken under the weight. For the purpose of relieving in some degree the mass which encumbered the route, it had been attempted to ford the stream with some of the artillery waggons, and in some in-



stances the attempt had succeeded, but in others the waggons had broken down, and thus choking up the path, had raised the confusion to its height.

The 1st corps reached the spot shortly before nightfall, and a few minutes after its arrival a mass of the enemy's cavalry accompanied by many cannon came up and directed a vigorous fire as well upon the 1st corps as upon the column under Prince Eugene; rendering it necessary for Davoust and his generals, and the soldiers of the division Gerard, to pass the night, without either food or sleep, in checking and driving back the enemy, re-establishing the broken bridge, and throwing chevalets across the stream at various points.

On the following day, the 2nd of November, at daybreak, Marshal Davoust again urged Prince Eugene to advance with the utmost despatch, so that he might arrive at an early hour on the 3rd at Wiasma, where Napoleon, who had been there since the 31st of October, waited with impatience the arrival of the rear guard, and where there was reason to fear an encounter with the main body of the Russian army, debouching by the Jouknow route. At the close of the day Fédérowkoïé, a place very little distant from Wiasma, had been reached, and it was agreed that Prince Eugene should set out from thence at three o'clock on the following morning. Unfortunately Prince Eugene was not endowed with sufficient vigour to carry out this arrangement, and it was past six o'clock before his troops were in motion.

At the distance of a league and a half from Wiasma the enemy became suddenly visible on the left, and opened fire on the miscellaneous crowd which followed the army, and was followed in turn by the extreme rear guard. At every discharge arose frightful shrieks from the helpless crowd, composed of unarmed soldiers, of sick and wounded men, of women and children. The 4th corps, that of Prince Eugene, urged it forward even with cruelty, and had just succeeded in defiling in its entirety, when, taking advantage of the interval between the two brigades of the division Delzons, a portion of the enemy's cavalry threw itself across and blocked up the road.

A brigade of the division Delzons and the remainder of Poniatowski's troops were thus checked in their advance and thrown back upon the head of the 1st corps, the five divisions of which were advancing in good order under the command of Marshal Davoust himself; and numbering fifteen thousand, to which they had been reduced from the twenty-eight thousand they numbered at Moscow, and the seventy-two thousand who filled their ranks at the passage of the Niemen.

The brave General Gerard, whose division formed the

advanced guard, perceiving that the rear of the 4th corps had been surprised and thrown back, hastened forward, under a vigorous fire, to seize the enemy's cannon, and the Russian cavalry immediately fled before him. Behind this cavalry was drawn up in order of battle the infantry under Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, but as the division Gerard immediately marched upon it whilst Delzon's second brigade and the remainder of the Polish troops threatened to take it in flank, Miloradovitch, who commanded it, did not dare to hold his position and withdrew to the left of the road, thus leaving it open.

Delzon's second brigade and the Polish troops having been thus delivered by the 1st corps, hastened to enter Wiasma, which town it would have been advisable to traverse, if possible, without a conflict with the enemy, but as fresh masses of the enemy were visible every moment flanking the route, and the bulk of the Russian army appeared in the direction of Jouknow, a combat was inevitable, and it became necessary to make the requisite preparations.

At the sound of the cannonade Marshal Ney had halted his corps at the moment it was leaving Wiasma, and, having proceeded in person to Davoust and Eugene, had arranged with them that he should deploy in front of the Jouknow route for the purpose of checking Kutusof, who, in fact, had arrived with the bulk of the Russian army, whilst Eugene posted the division Broussier between Wiasma and Davoust's corps, and the latter took up a position on the left of the route, for the purpose of making head against Miloradovitch. All the troops which were not required to be in line, together with the baggage and the stragglers, being directed to cross the river which divided Wiasma into two parts and was called by the same name, as soon as possible, and to hasten to gain the Dorogobouge route.

A little river, a tributary of the Wiasma, formed a natural defence around the city on the Jouknow side, and behind this little river Ney took up his position with the divisions Razout and Ledru, now reduced to six thousand men, whilst Broussier's troops formed the connecting link between Wiasma and Davoust's corps, which was drawn up in order of battle on the flank of the route, and possessed only forty serviceable pieces of cannon, although it had carried with it one hundred and twenty-seven.

A furious cannonade was exchanged between the opposed troops, but the nature of the ground being so marshy as it was, the Russian General, Miloradovitch, dared not to attack the imposing line of our veterans; as the night advanced, therefore, we retreated upon Wiasma, where a second

contest awaited us, a portion of the town having been invaded by the enemy, and where considerable confusion was caused amongst our troops by the fact that there were only two bridges across the Wiasma—one in the town and the other beyond it.

The French troops that had now entered Wiasma found no provisions there, all the resources which it had contained having been already exhausted by the guard and the various corps which had previously traversed it. In the cold and gloomy hours of the night, therefore, our troops had to plunge into a wood for shelter, and lighting three huge fires, prepared a meal of horse-flesh. And now, the troops under Marshal Davoust having during fifteen days formed the rear guard, Napoleon determined to replace them by Ney's corps; not because a sense of justice impelled him to give the former repose; but because, according to him, they had marched too slowly. In the midst of the guard, which marched at the head of the army, and consumed such provisions as could be procured from the country they traversed, leaving dead horses as the sole means of subsistence for those who followed, he saw nothing of the retreat, and wished to see nothing of it, for to have done so would have been to gaze too closely on the consequences of his own faults. Instead of taking an active part in the conduct of the retreat and bearing the brunt of the terrible evils of which he was the author, he remained two marches in advance of the rear guard, and sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot, but most frequently in a carriage, between Berthier, who was plunged in consternation, and Murat, who was almost annihilated by terror, he passed whole days without uttering a word—only rising at intervals from the abyss of gloomy reflections in which he was sunk, to utter complaints of his lieutenants, as though he could still deceive any one by blaming others than himself. When he received Marshal Davoust, whom he had not conversed with since the departure from Malo-Jaroslawetz, it was with the most bitter reproaches; whilst the latter, who, although moulded to the obedience of the time, possessed a proud spirit which no authority could bend, defended with bitterness the honour of the 1st corps, asserting the merit, not of his own services, but of those of his glorious lieutenants. Napoleon listened to the Marshal's defence in silence, but up to the time of his departure from the army, refrained from holding any further intercourse with him. As Masséna had been accused of being the cause of the misfortunes in the Peninsula, Davoust was now accused of being the cause of those which had attended the retreat, which, during fifteen days he had



conducted with the most indefatigable vigilance, the most unshrinking firmness.

On the 5th of November Napoleon arrived at Dorogobouge, Prince Eugene's corps reaching it on the 6th, and the other corps on the 7th and 8th. The cold had for some time past been very bitter, but not of a deadly intensity, but on the 9th a sudden and violent snow storm cruelly increased the general misery. Except in the ranks of the rear guard, which Davoust had conducted with inflexible firmness, and which Ney now conducted with an energy which no suffering could subdue, the sentiment of duty began to be utterly neglected in the ranks of the army. All the wounded had been left behind, and certain of the allied troops, to whom had been entrusted the Russian prisoners, had relieved themselves of the charge by destroying them. Seized by that contagious selfishness which is ever so sad and striking a feature in great calamities, immense numbers of soldiers deserted from their ranks to seek the means of subsistence, and to increase the disorderly and unarmed crowd which followed the army, and which numbered at the departure from Dorogobouge about fifty thousand persons. More than ten thousand soldiers had already been left dead on the route; there remained scarcely fifty thousand under arms, and all the cavalry, with the exception of that of the guard, was dismounted. But there remained only three more marches between the army and Smolensk, and there the army hoped to find magazines, provisions, clothing, shelter, reinforcements, and fortified walls. This hope supported the courage of the army, and Smolensk! Smolensk! was the universal cry.

But at Dorogobouge Napoleon received the most unfavourable news; unfavourable with respect to the course of military operations on the wings, and unfavourable with respect to affairs in France, where the government had been audaciously attacked.

On the two wings of the army the plans of the enemy had been completely developed. Admiral Tchitchakoff, after having joined Tormazoff with about thirty thousand men, and assumed the command of the two armies, had commenced operations on the offensive against the Prince of Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, who commanded with much unity but without much energy, the Austro-Saxon corps; driving them before him from the line of the Styr to that of the Bug. At the same time the allied generals were scarcely to blame, for General Reynier could not be more enterprising than the Prince de Schwarzenberg, and the latter could scarcely have done more than he did. Had he received a reinforcement of



ten thousand men he might have displayed greater hardihood, but the Austrian government, resolved to observe the terms of the agreement it had made with Russia, was far from desirous of increasing the auxiliary corps with which it had furnished Napoleon, and would only consent to raising it to thirty thousand by a reinforcement of five or six thousand.

The allied generals were in a position which formed their usual asylum, behind the marshes of Pinsk, when Prince Schwarzenberg having received information of the approach of these five or six thousand men by Zamosa, left General Reynier in position and proceeded to meet them. Having united these troops with his own he returned to Reynier, who, on his part awaited a reinforcement of twelve or thirteen thousand men, the division Durutte, which he expected to arrive by way of Warsaw. In the meantime Admiral Tchitchakoff, in conformity with the Emperor Alexander's instructions which had been sent to him by M. de Czernicheff, had left General Sacken with twenty-five thousand men in front of the allied generals, and had marched with thirty-five thousand upon the upper Berezina, for the purpose of acting in concert with Count Wittgenstein, who had been directed to repulse Marshal St. Cyr from the banks of the Dwina, and to advance to meet the army of Moldavia.

Whilst this was the condition of affairs on the right, that on the left, or in other words, on the lower and upper Dwina, was still worse. Marshal Macdonald, after having remained during the months of September and October close to Dunabourg, with a Polish division of seven or eight thousand men for the twofold purpose, in pursuit of which he was entirely unsuccessful, of covering the siege of Riga, and maintaining communications with Marshal St. Cyr, had withdrawn towards the lower Dwina, for the purpose of supporting the Prussians against the troops of Finland, which had been carried to Livonia according to the arrangement made by Russia with Sweden, and being from this moment thrown out of the radius of the operations of the grand army found itself condemned to a long period of inaction.

At Polotsk itself the progress of affairs had been still more disastrous. The Finland troops embarked for Revel had landed in Livonia, marched upon Riga, seconded General Essen in the demonstrations which had recalled Marshal Macdonald to the lower Dwina, and then ascended this river to the number of twelve thousand men, under the Count de Steinghel. Wittgenstein, reinforced by these troops and some militia, which raised the strength of his corps to forty-eight thousand men, had resolved to assume the offen-

sive for the purpose of obliging Marshal St. Cyr to evacuate Polotsk, and to act in concert with Admiral Tchitchakoff on the upper Berezina. In conformity with the plan of operations sent to St. Petersburg, the Count de Steinghel was to cross the Dwina below Polotsk for the purpose of harassing the rear of Marshal St. Cyr, and thus rendering more easy the execution of the direct operations which were in preparation against him. Marshal St. Cyr's whole force only amounted to twenty-two thousand men at the most, whilst that of the enemy against which he had to defend himself amounted to forty-five thousand, of whom thirty-three thousand were to attack him in front and twelve thousand to take him in reverse.

The city of Polotsk, situated, as we have already said, within the angle formed by the Polota and the Dwina towards their confluence, had been covered by defensive works of considerable strength. On the left, the Polota, which protected the front of the position, and the greater part of the town was furnished with well armed redoubts, whilst on the right, in the opening of the angle formed by the two rivers, earth-works had been thrown up. Behind the works on the Polota, which were the most easy to defend, Marshal St. Cyr had placed the Swiss and Croatian troops; and on the right, towards the opening of the angle, where it was most probable that the enemy's attack would be successful, the French divisions Legrand and Maison. The Bavarians were on this side of the Dwina with the cavalry. Many bridges crossing the river offered a means of retreat to the army should it be necessary to fall back.

This was the position in which Marshal St. Cyr firmly awaited the two attacks with which he was threatened, and towards which the enemy advanced on the morning of the 18th.

In accordance with the advice of General Diebitch, a young, able, and zealous officer, destined at a later period to acquire great renown, Wittgenstein carried the best and larger portion of his troops upon our right towards the opening of the angle formed by the Polota and the Dwina, for the purpose of drawing our whole force towards this most accessible part of our position, and then seizing with the remainder of his troops the Polota, which would then be undefended.

The Russians having debouched boldly on our right, advanced without hesitation towards that portion of the town which was unprotected by the Polota, and were vigorously encountered by the divisions Legrand and Maison, the latter of which, in a more exposed position than the former,

maintained its ground with the utmost firmness although assailed on every side, and at length succeeded in driving back the enemy to a considerable distance. The division Legrand acted with equal vigour, and the Russians were not only completely checked, but repulsed. In the meantime, Marshal St. Cyr had been sufficiently prudent not to leave his left unprotected, and when the remainder of the Russian troops, debouching in their turn, threw themselves upon the Polota redoubts, they were permitted to approach to the very foot of the works, and were overwhelmed by their fire. On this point, therefore, as on the other, in spite of some confusion caused by the over eagerness of the Swiss troops, the army of Count Wittgenstein was repulsed with a loss of from three to four thousand men, our own loss being about half this number.

Had he not been threatened by an attack in the rear by the corps under the command of Count Steinghel, Marshal St. Cyr would have considered himself well established on the Dwina; but this corps, after having passed the Dwina, ascended the left bank for the purpose of effecting a junction under Polotsk with a portion of Wittgenstein's forces, and in the presence of this danger of a double attack on both banks of the Dwina, Marshal St. Cyr considered that it would be wrong to persist in maintaining his position any longer, and evacuated Polotsk, therefore, during the night, with the intention of retreating in good order behind the Oula (which the Lepel canal unites with the Berezina), where he hoped to meet the Duke of Belluna.

The Duke of Belluna, in fact, after having long hesitated between Admiral Tchitchakoff, who came by the south, and Generals Wittgenstein and Steinghel, who came by the north, had been decided at length by what had taken place at Polotsk to hasten to the north, for the purpose of affording succour to Marshal St. Cyr. And as, unfortunately, the new arrangement which had changed the route of the army, had posted him, not at Witebsk, but at Smolensk, he had to traverse a very considerable space of ground to arrive at Lepel.

Thus at the end of October, two armies, consisting respectively of thirty-five thousand and forty-five thousand men, were on the point of effecting a junction on the upper Berezina, and closing the line of our retreat with eighty thousand men, a state of things of which the danger could only be removed by the junction and victory of Marshals Oudinot and Victor.

A great addition to Napoleon's sources of anxiety consisted in the fact that the abundance which the army had hoped to find at Smolensk did not actually exist there



for the active transport service which had been established by M. de Bassano from Kowno to Minsk by Wilna, had been chiefly employed in the conveyance of spirituous liquors and munitions of war, as it was confidently believed that sufficient corn would be found in Lithuania; but when an extensive requisition had been issued to the Lithuanian farmers for the corn which our commissariat required, they had made the want, either real or pretended, of waggons, a reason for neglecting to satisfy the demand.

In the meantime Napoleon received news from France which was of a still graver character; for France, which he had left so tranquil, so submissive, had been within the possibility of being torn from his grasp by an audacious maniac, whose easy success during a few hours proved how completely everything at this period in France depended on a single life;—a life incessantly threatened not by poignards but by bullets.

There had been detained during many years in the prisons of the *conciergerie*, an old officer, General Malet, an ardent and sincere republican, formed, as were so many men of his time and birth, in the school of J. J. Rousseau, who had been made a General by the republic, and could not pardon Napoleon for having destroyed it. The domination of a single idea renders a man mad or capable of extraordinary actions, and frequently produces both results simultaneously. The sole idea which filled the mind of General Malet was, that a ruler who was constantly making war would most probably one day be shot, and, that armed with news of this event, whether true or invented, he—General Malet—would easily seize the whole authority of the state, and compel the nation to accept another form of government, since the whole existing power lay in Napoleon himself alone. Completely governed by this idea, he never ceased to form plans for the purpose of surprising the authorities with fabricated news of Napoleon's proclaiming a new form of government, and inducing the nation, weary of despotism, silence, and war, to submit to it. Having, at length, in 1807 and 1809 almost determined to put his plan into execution, he was betrayed to the police and placed in confinement in Paris. As a prisoner he still brooded over the same idea, and being convinced that the moment when Napoleon was in Moscow was a most favourable time for putting his plan into execution, he proceeded to carry it out with incredible avidity.

In the *Maison de Santé* near the porte Saint Antoine, in which he had been confined, he had formed an intimacy with a priest who was animated by sentiments similar to his own, and with his assistance he selected two young men, very



innocent but very bold, and ignorant of his secret, whom he designed to employ as his aides-de-camp. By the assistance of these young persons he procured uniforms and pistols, and on the evening of the 22nd October, the day on which Napoleon was manœuvring around Malo-Jaroslavetz, he escaped by a window from the place in which he had been confined (the priest, his colleague, having already fled), ran to the lodging where the two young men awaited him, dressed one of them as an aide-de-camp, clothed himself in the uniform of a general, told them that Napoleon had died at Moscow on the 7th October; that the senate assembled that night had voted the re-establishment of the Republic; and then, displaying false orders which had been carefully prepared in his prison, proceeded to the Popincourt barrack, then occupied by the tenth cohort of the national guard, commanded by an old officer of the Revolution, named Soulier, who had served and acquired honour in Spain. General Malet had this officer awakened, and then proceeded to his bedside, feigning to be General Lamotte, declaring that Napoleon was dead, slain at Moscow by a ball on the 7th October; that the senate had secretly assembled, decided on the re-establishment of the Republic, and named General Malet commander of the public force in Paris; and that he, the speaker, had been sent to assume the command of the 10th legion to carry into execution certain orders on various points of the capital. This news was received by Soulier and the troops under his command, to whom he immediately communicated it, with extreme surprise, but without doubt, and the supposed commands were met by unhesitating obedience.

General Malet—the pretended General Lamotte—conducted the legion to the *Force* before daybreak; sent for the governor, showed him an order of release for Generals Lahorie and Guidal, obtained their deliverance with the utmost ease, embraced them, declared the wonderful news, and pretending to share the delight which it caused them, showed them the decree of the senate, and pointed out to them the manner in which they were to act. Guidal was to proceed to seize the minister of war, and Lahorie the minister of police, whilst he, Malet, seized General Hulin, governor of the fortifications. Malet then sent one of his young men to Frochot, the prefect of the Seine, with the pretended decrees of the senate and an order to prepare the Hotel de Ville for the sittings of the provisional government; and despatched the other to one of the regiments of the garrison, with orders to the Colonel to seize all the barriers of Paris, and to let no one either enter or depart.

The minister of police having passed the night in sending off despatches, had given strict orders that he should on no account be disturbed; General Lahorie, therefore, having entered his hotel, burst open the door of his chamber, and appearing before the surprised minister, with whom he had served and been on terms of friendship, exclaimed, "Surrender without resistance, for I love you and am unwilling to injure you. The Emperor is dead, the empire is abolished, and the senate has re-established the Republic." The Duke of Rovigo replied that he must be mad, that a letter which had arrived the previous evening from the Emperor, disproved the assertion, and that its author must be an impostor. Somewhat moved by the Duke's assertions, although he still persisted in his own belief, Lahorie ran to consult with Guidal, and returning with him, repeated his assertions, commanded the minister to be silent, and sent him to the conciergerie, to which place the prefect of police had already been sent by similar means.

Up to this point the plot had succeeded well, but the arrest of the minister of police had somewhat delayed that of the minister of war, and General Malet himself lost time in effecting that of General Hulin, the governor of the place de Paris, whom he had surprised in bed, and to whom he had made the same assertions which had already met with so much success. General Hulin had received without hesitation the news of Napoleon's death, but was reluctant to believe that the Republic had been re-established by a decree of the senate, and demanded of General Malet the production of his orders, when the latter—more faithful to his plan than his accomplices had been—replied to General Hulin that he would show them to him in his cabinet, and accompanying him thither shot him down with a pistol. From the cabinet Malet proceeded to the chief of the staff, Droucet, repeated his tale, announced to him his elevation to the grade of general, and demanded of him the immediate surrender of the command of the fortress. But at this point of his undertaking his nerves began to give way, he hesitated, lost time, and encouraged by his manner an incredulity which he failed to overwhelm by an absolute affirmation of the truth of his assertions or another pistol-shot. Whilst he was conversing with Droucet, another officer of the fortress named Laborde, came up, and recognising Malet's features, at once surmised that he was conducting an audacious conspiracy, called to the spot an officer of police who was well acquainted with Malet, and who perceived that he was one of the persons under his charge, and demanding how and why he had quitted his prison, embarrassed and disconcerted him to such a degree that he lost all command over

his troop; and, upon his attempting to use his arms, he was overpowered and placed under arrest in the presence of his soldiers, who began to think that they might have been deceived. Malet flattered himself that his accomplices would come to his succour; but instead of them, a portion of the imperial guard soon afterwards came up and arrested those who had come to make arrests.

Within an hour the Duke of Rovigo and the prefect of police were set at liberty, and resumed the functions of their several affairs. In the meantime the prefect of the Seine, who had arrived from the country at day-break, hearing on all sides the news of which the Hotel de Ville was full, had not doubted its truth, and had begun to arrange the apartment, respecting which Malet had sent directions. In like manner the commander of the regiment which had been charged with the duty of taking possession of the barriers had obeyed the orders received, and had sent detachments to carry them into execution.

It was scarcely noon when the whole affair was over, everything in its old position, the authorities, for a moment surprised, re-established in their functions; and Paris, becoming informed of this rapid series of events, passed from a feeling of alarm to one of intense amusement at the expense of a detested police which had been so easily overpowered. And this feeling of amusement was again, in its turn, succeeded by one of terror at the existence of such a state of things as that which had permitted this affair to take place. In the meantime the police and the military authority, fearing that Napoleon would attribute the blame of this extraordinary adventure to one of them, were equally anxious for an examination into the facts of the case, each hoping that the result would be its own justification and the blame of the other. The fact was that although the police had not discovered, and the military authorities had assisted in the execution of the plot, they were equally and entirely innocent; for on the one hand the police could not possibly have discovered what existed only in the head of a single man, and on the other it was perfectly natural, that an inferior military authority should believe the occurrence of so probable a circumstance as the death of Napoleon. The government, composed of the ministers, the great dignitaries present in Paris, assembled under the presidency of the arch-chancellor Cambacérès, to determine upon what steps should be taken in respect to what had just occurred, and resolved upon the appointment of a military commission for the purpose of trying more than twenty accused persons. The result was that fourteen unhappy wretches were



arrested, and within fifteen days judged and condemned, and twelve of them executed.

Such was the strange news which reached Napoleon at Dorogobouge ; news which was of a nature to cause him great anxiety both with respect to his retreat and to the signs which it manifested of the ephemeral nature of his prodigious power. But what he was most struck by was the complete forgetfulness of his son, which was displayed by all those persons who were so ready to trust in and to obey himself. "What then !" he frequently exclaimed, "they hold in no account my son, my wife, the institutions of the Empire ?" And every time that he gave utterance to this sad exclamation he relapsed into sombre reflections of which the bitterness could only be judged by the sad expression of his countenance. With respect to the executions which had taken place in Paris, he expressed considerable dissatisfaction, saying, "These imbeciles, having permitted themselves to be surprised, endeavour to conciliate me by shooting people by dozens."

But Napoleon had little time to spare to the consideration of the ephemeral conspiracy which had taken place at Paris, for it was absolutely necessary that he should take immediate measures for preventing the concentration of all the enemy's forces on our rear ; a danger which was very imminent, and the reality of which would very probably reduce the French army to pass under the Caudine forks, and even throw Napoleon himself into the hands of the Russian Emperor.

Napoleon sent orders to Schwarzenberg and Reynier to march as speedily as possible against Admiral Tchitchakoff, since the presence of this general on the Berezina, or in other words, on the line of retreat of the French army, might have very disastrous results. To the Duke of Belluna he wrote directing him to join Marshal Oudinot immediately, that the two marshals might advance against Wittgenstein with their united forces, which would be much superior to the enemy both in number and quality, and by driving him beyond the Dwina, and gaining over him a great battle, relieve the grand army itself from the necessity of fighting one. To Wilna he sent directions that one of Marshal Augereau's divisions (General Loison's) should be sent from Königsberg. At the same time he recommended M. de Bassano, who displayed at Wilna the greatest administrative ability, to direct upon the various depôts of the army, namely Minsk, Borisow, Orscha, and Smolensk, all the resources which could be procured ; and ordered the purchase of fifty thousand horses in Germany and Poland.

Having despatched these orders Napoleon set out for Smolensk, urging Marshal Ney, who was to cover the retreat, to delay the enemy as long as possible, and directing



Prince Eugene to leave the Smolensk route at Dorogobouge for that of Doukhowtchina, which he had already traversed, on which it would be possible to procure a certain amount of provisions, and from whence it would be possible to secure the position at Witebsk, which was at this moment threatened by Wittgenstein.

Napoleon quitted Dorogobouge on the 6th of November, and the whole army followed on the 7th and 8th. The season in which the expedition had been commenced, and the belief that the army would have returned before the approach of the inclement weather, had led to the neglect of warm clothing or ice cramps, and our unhappy soldiers marched wrapped up in all variety of clothing, which had been snatched from the flames of Moscow, and quite unable to protect themselves from the cold only nine or ten degrees above zero; whilst at every elevation, rendered slippery by the ice, the artillery horses, even when doubled or trebled, failed to draw pieces of the smallest size. The greater portion of the munitions had been abandoned almost at the commencement of the march, and now with shame and reluctance our soldiers found it absolutely necessary to leave their cannon to be seized as trophies by the Russians. Day by day the waggons which accompanied the army diminished in number, for large numbers of the horses died each day, and of those which remained many were sabred by the soldiers that their flesh might provide the evening meal, which the troops prepared at the huge fires around which they bivouacked at night, and beside which they laid day after day, with scarcely a thought, dead and dying wretches, whom the snow speedily covered, and who lay there the victims of the most foolish of enterprises.

Whilst Napoleon marched upon Smolensk, Prince Eugene followed the Doukhowtchina route, and at the close of the first day's march, his artillery and baggage were suddenly checked by a hill, up which the most strenuous efforts of the artillerymen could only raise the very lightest cannon, and at the foot of which, consequently, the heaviest pieces had to be abandoned. On the following morning the troops resumed their march at an early hour for the sake of crossing the Vop, a river which in the month of August had been a mere brook, but which now rolled wide and deep, and was full of mud. The pontonniers who accompanied Prince Eugene's troops had hastened forward, and had employed the night in the construction of a bridge, which was, however, but partly completed, when a crowd of stragglers coming up in the midst of a thick mist, attempted to cross it, with so much eager-

ness that many were precipitated into the water and drowned. In the meantime some of the cavalry who still possessed their horses, made a successful search for a ford, by which the transit of the river was at length accomplished by the main body of the troops; but when it was attempted to convey the cannon across to the other bank, some of the pieces soon became fastened in the bed of the river, and thus obstructed the passage at the very moment when between three and four thousand Cossacks ran up, uttering the most savage cries, and, upon being checked by the fire of the rear guard, threw a storm of bullets upon the terrified crowd of unarmed soldiers and fugitives from Moscow, who were still attempting to pass to the other bank of the river. At every instant the tumult increased, and it became necessary to resign the baggage, which was the sole source of subsistence, to the fugitives, and which had up to this time afforded some resources to the officers.

This deplorable event known in the history of the retreat as the disaster of Vop, and the prelude of another disaster of the same nature but a hundred times more horrible, retained the army of Italy beside the Vop until and during the night; and on the following day it resumed its march by the Doukhowtchina route, having lost all its baggage and all its artillery with the exception of seven or eight pieces; whilst a thousand unhappy wretches, struck by the enemy's bullets or drowned in the stream, had paid with their lives for this which we shall soon find to have been an entirely useless march.

In the course of the 10th of November Prince Eugene's troops arrived at Doukhowtchina, a little town of some wealth, in which the army of Italy had already passed the preceding August. The Cossacks now occupied it but were speedily chased away; and in this town of Doukhowtchina which, although deserted still contained some resources, the unfortunate corps which had now reached it, found a certain degree of repose, shelter, and abundance.

Some Poles having been dispatched in search of information of the general state of affairs, brought back news which almost convinced Prince Eugene and his staff that the city of Witebsk had been taken, and rendered them, therefore, unanimously of opinion that the wisest plan would be to re-join the grand army by marching directly upon Smolensk. In order to gain a march the corps set out during the night of the 11th, having first set fire to the poor wooden town which had afforded them so much succour; and continuing their march during that night and a portion of the following day, closely pursued by the Cossacks, passed the night o

the 12th under the shelter of a few villages; and resuming their march on the following morning, about midday perceived from the hills which border the Dnieper, in the midst of plains gleaming with snow, the towers of Smolensk, which, ignorant of what, alas! was still to come, they regarded almost as the frontier of France.

During these same days, the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th of November, the grand army had continued its march by the Dorogobouge route to Smolensk, strewing its path with the corpses of men and horses, and abandoned baggage, the troops consoling themselves with the idea that at Smolensk they would find repose, provisions, reinforcements, and victory. But whilst the head of the army pursued its march, having to contend only with the one great enemy—the inclement weather, the rear guard, conducted by Marshal Ney, was engaged in perpetual encounters with the enemy's forces. At Dorogobouge Ney resolved to defend that town sufficiently long to enable the body of the army, with its matériel and the miscellaneous crowd which accompanied it, time to reach Smolensk. He accordingly remained two days at Dorogobouge and then, as the Russians, having passed the Dnieper on his right, threatened to surround him, he withdrew towards the other passage of the Dnieper, at Solowiewo, when he again checked the enemy's advance. At some leagues from this place, on the Valoutina plateau, he had determined to take up a position and maintain it against the enemy, but having reached the ground he found it necessary to enter Smolensk, and accordingly did so, after having made every exertion to delay the enemy's pursuit.

Napoleon knew, as he entered Smolensk, that it did not contain the vast magazines which the army supposed to be there, but he hoped that the eight or ten days' provisions which actually were there would suffice to attract the disbanded soldiers to their standards, as he intended that provisions should only be distributed at the quarters of each regiment. Having entered Smolensk at the head of the guard he ordered that none others should be admitted; an order which inspired a general feeling of despair and indignation, and of jealous dislike of the Guard, which had been of so little service throughout the campaign. These feelings were most bitterly and loudly expressed by the stragglers, but they were shared by the soldiers of the 1st corps, which had never for a single day been spared any labour or danger; and, in spite of their habits of discipline, they joined the unarmed crowd which blocked up the gates of Smolensk, and making a violent entry into the streets of Smolensk advanced towards the magazines, the keepers of which, directing the famished



troops to proceed to the quarters of their respective regiments, assuring them that they should be supplied there with rations, were for a moment believed and obeyed. But when, after having wandered in every direction throughout the town the soldiers could find no trace of the distribution of rations which had been promised, they returned, uttering seditious cries, and casting themselves upon the magazines, burst open the doors and pillaged them.—“The magazines are being pillaged,” was a cry which created a general feeling of terror and despair, and attracted every one to the spot in the hope of obtaining some share of the spoil. After some time, however, a certain degree of order was re-established, and a portion of the contents of the magazines were preserved for the corps of Prince Eugene and Marshal Ney, which now arrived, continually fighting with the enemy and checking their advance upon the town. There was no longer room for the illusion that the army would be able to find at Smolensk either food, clothing, shelter, or reinforcements; and it was evident, on the contrary, that it would be absolutely necessary to set out on the following day, recommencing an interminable march, enduring every species of privations, and engaged in perpetual conflicts with the enemy, with the cruel certainty that to receive a wound would be equivalent to becoming the prey of the wolves and the vultures. This was a prospect which threw the army into despair, and yet it knew not the worst.

In the meantime Napoleon had received news still more disastrous than that which had reached him at Dorogobouge. In the first place General Baraguey d'Hilliers having advanced, in accordance with orders received from head quarters, with his division upon the Jelnia route, had fallen into the midst of the Russian army, and having lost the brigade Augereau, consisting of two thousand men, returned to Smolensk, when Napoleon by an order of the day directed him to return to France that his conduct might be made the subject of inquiry before a military commission. At the same moment Napoleon was informed that Tchitchakoff's army had made fresh progress, threatening Minsk and the immense magazines which it contained, and our line of retreat; that Prince Schwarzenberg, hesitating between the plan of following Tchitchakoff and the fear of leaving Sacken on his rear, was losing time in useless inactivity; that the Duke of Belluna (Marshal Victor) had found upon the Oula the 2nd corps separated from the Bavarians and reduced by this separation to ten thousand men, his own forces amounting only to five thousand; and that the two Marshals, Victor and Oudinot, entertaining exaggerated ideas



of the forces at Wittgenstein's command and fearing to give him battle with their united forces, numbering thirty-eight thousand men, had confined themselves to marches and counter-marches between Lepel and Sienna. The French general having neglected, therefore, to drive them by a prompt victory beyond the Dwina, Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein advanced rapidly towards each other, with the purpose of effecting a junction on the upper Berezina. And what would be the position of the wreck of the French army between Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein in front and Kutusof in its rear ?

It was necessary, however, to adopt some decided measure, for it was absolutely impossible to remain at Smolensk, where there were not at the most more than seven or eight days' provisions. The French army would be compelled, therefore, to seek the means of subsistence elsewhere, in the midst of Poland, and beyond the Berezina, which the two Russian armies threatened to close against us ; and consequently, it could not with safety delay a single day at Smolensk.

Napoleon resolved to leave Smolensk on the 14th with the corps which had arrived there on the 9th ; and to order that those which had successively entered on the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th, should resume their march on the 15th, 16th, and 17th. And in this instance Napoleon committed a fault little worthy of his genius and only explicable by the false ideas which he had formed respecting the army under Kutusof, and in fact trusting to the terror with which he knew he was regarded by this Russian General, he supposed it most improbable that he should find him on his road from Smolensk to Minsk, and expected that at the most he would only venture on some skirmishes with the rear guard. Entertaining these ideas, therefore, he failed to take care to place the Dnieper between the Russian army and himself, or even to continue his retreat upon Minsk by the right bank of this river ; preferring to follow the beaten track on the left bank running from Smolensk to Orscha, by which he had come, and which was the shortest and best. And so convinced was he of the justice of the opinion which he had formed, that he did not even move the whole of his troops en masse, in which case he would still ( alas ! that we should have to make such a statement ) have had thirty-six thousand men to oppose Kutusof's fifty thousand, for, in his haste to pass the sixty leagues which intervened between Borisow on the Berezina, he thought that by making the troops which had arrived on the 9th set out on the 11th, and those that had arrived on the 10th, 11th, and 12th, set out on the 15th, 16th, and 17th, respectively, he would be allowing to each corps

time to obtain some repose, and a certain degree of reorganization before encountering the army of Moldavia—the only hostile force which Napoleon at the moment took into consideration.

After having in some measure reorganized his army—now consisting of about twelve thousand men under Davoust, five thousand under Ney, six thousand under Eugene, one thousand under Junot who commanded the Westphalians, seven or eight hundred Poles under Prince Poniatowski, the eleven thousand to which the Guard, in spite of the care which had been bestowed upon its preservation, had been reduced, and the five hundred of the cavalry who alone remained mounted—Napoleon for the second time ordered Prince Schwarzenberg to pursue Admiral Tchitchakoff with the utmost vigour for the purpose of taking him in the rear before he should have time to attack the main body of the French army, and at the same time directed Marshals Oudinot and Victor to attack Wittgenstein without delay, for the purpose of driving him from the Berezina if it were not possible to throw him back beyond the Dwina. Having given these orders he set out on the morning of the 14th with the Guard preceded by the dismounted cavalry under General Sebastiani and followed by a large portion of the encumbrances by which the army was attended. At the very moment of his departure he ordered that Marshal Ney should not set out until the various arrangements he had made relative to the departure of the army from Smolensk should have been completely carried out, and gave time for the execution of this order until the 17th—a fatal resolution which cost the lives of many of our best troops.

Napoleon having set out, as has been already stated, on the morning of the 14th, passed the night of that day at Koritnia, situated half way between Smolensk and Krasnoé, and on the following day reached the last named place where he found General Sebastiani, who had advanced thither on the previous day with the dismounted cavalry, resisting the attacks of the enemy in a church in which they had driven him to take refuge. Napoleon released Sebastiani and his troops from their state of siege, but learned with painful surprise that Kutusof, not content with merely harassing our march, was approaching Krasnoé with his whole force. And in fact the Russian generalissimo, although he did not intend to bar the road of the French army completely and thus drive us to despair, had determined to inflict upon us some serious loss, and with this purpose had taken up a position in the defile of Krasnoé, situated half way between Smolensk and Orscha, and consisting of a bridge crossing a ravine through which flows the Losmina, a river which falls into the Dnieper at two leagues

distance from Krasnoé. The route from Smolensk to Krasnoé lay over this bridge and ravine, and the enemy, therefore, having purposely permitted a portion of the French army to pass them, could, by blockading Krasnoé with a portion of their forces and occupying the bank of the ravine with the remainder, interrupt the passage of those of our columns which had not yet crossed it.

Napoleon passed the morning of the 16th in a state of great anxiety with respect to Prince Eugene's corps, which, having set out from Smolensk on the 15th with the intention of passing the night of that day at Koritnia, ought to appear before Krasnoé during the 16th; and, in fact, accompanied by a large number of disbanded soldiers and escorting almost all the parks of artillery belonging to the Guard and the 1st corps, it did reach the border of the Losmina ravine, and found there Miloradovitch's corps flanking the route with a portion of its troops and barring it with the remainder; at the same time beholding behind Miloradovitch's corps other columns of infantry and cavalry, surrounding in dense masses the little city of Krasnoé. A single glance showed that the only practicable course which could be adopted was to force a passage through the enemy at the sword's point, and Prince Eugene did not hesitate a moment to adopt it. Placing the division Broussier on the left of the route, the division Delzons on the route itself, and the wrecks of the Italian, Polish, and Westphalian divisions in the rear, he made a vigorous attack upon the enemy, who besides the advantages of their position had at their command an immense number of well posted cannon with which they covered our troops with grape. Always heroic, the division Broussier advanced under this murderous fire towards the left of the route, resolved to take the enemy's batteries at the point of the bayonet, but after having sustained and valiantly resisted the charge of a host of cavalry, and lost within the space of an hour between two and three thousand in killed and wounded, it was compelled to fall back, and resign the attempt to pierce the wall of fire with which the Russians blocked up its path.

After having disdainfully dismissed an officer sent by Kutusof to summon in respectful terms the Prince to surrender, Eugene concerted with his generals a plan which appeared to offer some chance of success, and which consisted in leaving the division Broussier in line to feign another attack upon the left, against the heights which bordered the route, whilst the remainder of the troops gained the plain on the right, beside the Dnieper, and then clandestinely defiled towards Krasnoé under cover of the night, which at this period of the year commenced about four or five o'clock. This plan



involved the destruction of the remainder of the division Broussier, but implicit reliance could be placed on the devotion of this heroic troop. Towards nightfall, therefore, Prince Eugene having carried forward upon the left the remnant of the unhappy division Broussier, so as to direct towards it the enemy's entire attention, led the remainder of his troops towards the Dnieper under cover of some elevated ground, and thus, after a two hours' march, succeeded in reaching Krasnoé, having left upon the road two thousand in killed and wounded, and the remainder of Broussier's division, which could only be saved by the arrival of Marshals Davoust and Ney.

Napoleon received his adopted son with a species of joy mingled with bitterness, and being relieved of anxiety on his account became completely absorbed in reflections on what might have been the fate of Davoust and Ney who still remained in the rear, and who, marching a day's march apart from each other in accordance with the orders which he had given, would have to encounter the enemy separately and to suffer cruel losses before they could reach Krasnoé. But the more reason Napoleon found for regretting that he had not marched his troops from Smolensk en masse and taken the right bank of the Dnieper, the more resolved he was to await at Krasnoé the arrival of the two Marshals, whatever might be the consequences, and to fight a battle if necessary, for the purpose of reopening the route. He resolved now to devote wholly to the purpose of extricating his two lieutenants the Guard, which he had hitherto taken such pains to preserve, and thus to provide himself with the best possible reason for not having employed it at Borodino.

The plan which Napoleon proposed to follow was very simple, and consisted in advancing the guard along the Smolensk route, which was that which would be pursued by Davoust and Ney, and awaiting the appearance of the former of these Marshals on a plateau behind Krasnoé, at the foot of which passed the Losmina ravine. This measure was duly executed, and as the Russians had on the same evening taken up a position in Koutkowo, a village very close to Krasnoé, he had it carried at the bayonet's point by a regiment of the young Guard, which took vengeance on the troops of Count Ojarowski for the losses which we had suffered during the day.

In the meantime Marshal Davoust having personally visited during the night of the 18th, which his divisions passed at Koritnia, the spot where the four hundred men, who alone remained of the three thousand who had originally composed the unhappy division Broussier, lay upon the snow



mingled in a confused heap with the dying and the dead, he promptly formed the resolution to save, sword in hand, not only his his own corps, but this remnant of Prince Eugene's column also. As he had left one of his divisions, the 2nd, with Marshal Ney, for the purpose of reinforcing the rear guard, he had only four of his five divisions, consisting of about nine or ten thousand men, at his command, but he did not for a moment doubt that with such a force as this, resolutely used, he could force a passage through any obstacle.

A little before daybreak he carried his four divisions in advance, formed in close column, and ordered them to charge the enemy at the bayonet's point, and force a passage through the enemy's ranks in a hand to hand conflict. In the meantime Kutusof, supposing that Napoleon was already en route for Orscha, had sent a portion of his forces under General Tormazoff for the purpose of preventing his re-entry into Krasnoé, and had posted the remainder around Krasnoé itself, leaving only Miloradovitch and his troops along the Losmina ravine to bar the Smolensk route.

Marshal Davoust's four divisions charged the troops under Miloradovitch as they had been ordered; and as the latter, terrified at their inpetuosity, withdrew from before them to the side of the route, they arrived almost uninjured at the border of the Losmina ravine, where they found the young Guard, and posted themselves there in such a manner on the right and left of the ravine as to afford support to all the troops which had not yet arrived; and thus were saved the remnant of Broussier's division, and the parks of artillery which had hitherto been left in the rear.

Continual and violent attacks on the part of the enemy, however, rendered it necessary to adopt some decided course, and as General Tormazoff had commenced his movement around Krasnoé for the purpose of intercepting the Orscha route, Napoleon resolved not to persevere in the bold attempt to hold the enemy in check at Krasnoé at the risk of being cut off from Orscha, the only point open to the French at which they could effect the passage of the Dnieper, and thus forced to lay down his arms. To retreat would be in all probability to sacrifice Marshal Ney, and as Napoleon, whilst extremely eager to reach Orscha, was at the same time very unwilling to give orders, the execution of which must necessarily involve the abandonment of Ney, he issued equivocal commands which were alike unworthy of the integrity of his spirit and the vigour of his character, and which were startling manifestations of the horror of the position in which he had placed himself. By ordering the 1st corps to follow the other troops in their departure from

Krasnoé, and at the same time directing it to await there as long as possible the arrival of Marshal Ney, he threw upon this heroic and well disciplined corps, the terrible responsibility of abandoning Marshal Ney.

Napoleon now departed in all haste by the Krasnoé route to Orscha, accompanied by his Guard, and under a terrible fire from the enemy's guns, but without meeting any invincible obstacle. As each French corps defiled along the road Tormazoff's columns advanced, evidently with the intention of blocking up the road which in the meantime they covered with their fire; and Marshal Mortier, who had to sustain whilst effecting his departure from Krasnoé frequent charges from the enemy's cavalry, perceiving the imminence of the danger, sent information of his departure to Marshal Davoust and urged him to follow him, declaring that he had not a moment to lose. The day was declining, the enemy overwhelmed Krasnoé with a complete storm of fire, and the confusion there was at its height. The five thousand men who were still under Marshal Davoust's command demanded that they should not be condemned to a useless death or certain captivity, and their leader found it necessary to conform to the only command which circumstances permitted him to follow, and to depart from Krasnoé. As Ney had not set out from Smolensk until the morning of the 17th he could not have reached Krasnoé before the evening of the 18th, and by waiting his arrival until then Marshal Davoust would, without saving Ney, have exposed his troops to captivity or death. He proceeded from Krasnoé, therefore, in the direction of Liady.

In the meantime Marshal Ney's corps and the division Ricard, which had also been entrusted to this Marshal, having blown up the towers of Smolensk, hidden in the earth or thrown into the Dnieper all the cannon which they could not remove, and pushed forward as far as possible the crowd of disbanded soldiers, had departed from Smolensk on the morning of the 17th. Marshal Ney had set out from Smolensk expecting to find the enemy hovering on his rear and on his flanks, and prepared to make a vigorous resistance to his attacks, but by no means expecting to find his path closed by a hostile force as impassible as a wall of fire. Marshal Davoust had sent him information from Koritnia on the evening of the 16th of the perils which he would probably encounter on the following day; but as the enemy had shortly afterwards interposed between them, communication between the two Marshals was no longer possible, which was a most unfortunate circumstance, for had Ney received timely warning of the state of affairs, he might have left Smolensk by the

right of the Dnieper, and by means of a night's march have probably reached Orscha before the Russians had time to become acquainted with their departure, and to cross the river on the ice which was not in every part sufficiently solid to afford a passage. Being without any precise information, Marshal Ney set out on the 17th in accordance with Napoleon's directions, reached Koritnia in the evening, and on the following day, the 18th, advanced upon Krasnoé.

The division Ricard arrived first in the presence of the enemy, and marching boldly to the attack, was immediately overwhelmed by so terrible a fire from the Russian artillery posted on the bank of the Losmina ravine that it was compelled to pause and await the approach of Marshal Ney, who, as soon as he came up, lost no time in forming his troops into columns of attack, and crossing the ravine under a terrible fire of musketry drove the Russians at the point of the bayonet to the left of the route. But although thus for a time successful, renewed charges on the part of the Russians, accompanied by the fire from a hundred pieces of cannon, again compelled them to give way, and to fall back upon the position from whence they had commenced the attack, reduced within the space of an hour from seven thousand men to four thousand. Against the whole of Kutusof's army, and the whole of it was present, such a force as this could not hope for success, and Ney, renouncing the expectation of it, immediately formed a resolution of remaining out of reach of the enemy's fire until the close of the day, and then, under cover of the darkness, to cross the Dnieper and escape by the right bank ; for, with his habitual confidence, he appeared to entertain no doubts that the ice was in such a state as to afford a passage for his troops ; and when one of his officers ventured to express some doubt on the subject, he had replied roughly, that the passage would be effected across the ice, or in some way or other.

The Russians, having no suspicion of Marshal Ney's design, supposed, when they found him retreating out of the range of their fire, that he and his troops must certainly become their prisoners in the course of the following day, and being willing to avoid an useless effusion of blood, sent to inform him of the desperate nature of his position, advising him to capitulate, and declaring that the valour of his troops should be acknowledged by the offer of such conditions only as were worthy of them. Ney, however declined to give any answer to this message, and detained the messenger lest he should, on his return, carry back some intimation of the course the French were about to pursue.



At nightfall, in accordance with his proposed plan Ney carried his troops forward towards the Dnieper, and having succeeded in gaining its bank, found it just sufficiently frozen to allow its passage to be effected by the exercise of great caution. The troops having crossed the river, together with a few pieces of cannon and some baggage waggons which had been carried over with considerable difficulty, proceeded along the bank of the river in the direction of Orscha. As they had to march fifteen leagues across an unknown country not a moment was to be lost, and they continued their march constantly throughout the night until the noon of the following day, when they came to some villages and found a certain quantity of provisions, which, famished as they were, they instantly proceeded to devour. Scarcely had this repast terminated when a considerable number of Cossacks appeared, commanded by Platow himself, and towards the close of the day assailed the French in such masses that their road appeared to be cut off. However, they threw themselves into the woods which bordered the Dnieper, and defended themselves until nightfall. About one o'clock they rallied round a village where they found some provisions, and at two o'clock resumed their march towards Orscha.

Towards noon it was unfortunately necessary to traverse a considerable plain, on which Platow's troops, who appeared in still more considerable numbers than on the previous day, directed against our soldiers the fire from a very numerous artillery. Marshal Ney, however, immediately formed his troops into squares, and supporting their failing hearts with his own undaunted energy, succeeded in repulsing the Cossacks, slaying many of them, and then led his troops to a village where they found both food and shelter. He had sent forward a Pole to Orscha to give information of his miraculous retreat, and to demand aid; and when his troops, who had resumed their march after taking some repose, were within a league of Orscha, they perceived with unspeakable consternation the approach of an armed force; but Ney, always confident and relying on the message which he had sent by the Pole, did not hesitate to advance, and found the strange troops to be three thousand men advancing to his relief under Prince Eugene and Marshal Mortier.

And thus of six or seven thousand men Ney had brought back to the army twelve hundred at the most; and these almost dying from fatigue and utterly incapable of any active service. But at the same time he had saved the honour of the French armies, rescued for France his name, his person, and by the successes of his manœuvre forced from the enemy an expiation of the cruel success they had obtained during the



last few days. Napoleon himself was intensely rejoiced at Ney's return, for it spared him the humiliation of having it said throughout Europe that Ney was a prisoner in the hands of the Russians. But he had the wickedness to allow the odium of the abandonment of Marshal Ney to fall on Marshal Davoust, and either from anxiety to exonerate himself, or from the bitterness of spirit which the unfavourable state of affairs was so calculated to aggravate, he manifested with respect to Marshal Davoust a degree of disapprobation, which the general despondency and the pleasure common to human nature of depreciating a hitherto unstained renown, hastened to accredit and to propagate.

The total strength of the army at Orscha was now, at the most, twenty-four thousand armed men and twenty-five thousand stragglers; the half of the numbers which had set out from Moscow, and the eighth part of the four hundred and twenty thousand men which had passed the Niemen. But at the same time, although the Russians had obtained great results, they had not obtained an equal amount of glory, for with fifty thousand or sixty thousand thoroughly effective troops, an immense artillery, and a position such as that of Krasnoé, they should have been able, if not to stop the whole army, at least to have taken the chief portion of it. As the case actually was, they had obtained no trophies but the corpses of the French soldiers who had fallen beneath the grape of their cannon, and crowds of stragglers whom wretchedness had deprived of their arms. Throughout these operations, in fact, the only real merit to be attributed to the Russians, is in respect to the constant prudence of Generalissimo Kutusof, who, relying on the effects of the winter and the climate, had resolved to expend as little blood as possible, and to obtain the most brilliant success without having incurred any corresponding risk. But deserving of praise as this prudent conduct is, still, when we consider the decisive results which he might have obtained by more vigorous conduct, we can only regard it as the hesitation of a timid old man, who eventually took credit for results which were rather the work of fortune than of himself.

Finding himself at Orscha in a secure position and in possession of well furnished magazines of provisions, Napoleon made a new attempt to rally his army, and, by means of a detachment of gendarmerie d'élite, which had recently arrived, to incorporate in its ranks the crowd of disbanded soldiers. But all such efforts were fruitless, for the men who had once thrown off the yoke of honour were not inclined to resume it. The moral contagion had extended

even to the Guard, and Napoleon found it necessary to assemble it for the purpose of addressing it in person, and endeavouring to inspire it with its old feeling of duty, by declaring that it was the last asylum of French military honour, that to it especially belonged the obligation of giving the example of good discipline, and of thus saving the remainder of the army from the dissolution which threatened it; that if the Guard should fall away from the path of duty it would not have the excuse of want possessed by the other corps, since such resources as had been obtainable had always been reserved for its use; that he would employ the severest means to preserve the discipline of his Guard, but that he hoped that it would be maintained rather by its old military virtues, and that from its devotion rather than its fear would be obtained the good example he desired it to display.

At Orscha, also, struck with the inconvenience occasioned to the army by the presence of long files of baggage, Napoleon commanded that all the baggage waggons should be destroyed except those which contained the wounded or the fugitive families, or belonged to the artillery or engineer corps, and except one for himself and Murat, and one for each of the Marshals. In his zeal for the preservation of the artillery, and in spite of the representations of General Eblé, he even ordered the destruction of the two pontoon equipages which had been left at Orscha, permitting only, at General Eblé's urgent request, the transport of the materials necessary for a pont de chevalets. At this time were destroyed also Napoleon's military correspondence and a quantity of other precious papers.

The efforts, however, which were now made to bring the army into shape were as useless as all the previous attempts of the same nature. A prolonged period of repose, a secure position, abundance of resources, and association with troops in a good state of discipline, could alone have restored order to the ranks of the army. The prohibition to distribute provisions to any but those soldiers who should be present at the quarters of their regiments was disregarded after a few hours, to save the magazines not only from pillage, but also from the destruction with which they were menaced by the rapid approach of the enemy.

Whilst at Orscha news reached Napoleon which was of a more disastrous character than any he had yet received; and which informed him that Schwarzenberg had been decidedly outflanked by Admiral Tchitchakoff on the upper Berezina, the latter having marched, whilst Schwarzenberg was hesitating what course to pursue, by Slonim upon Minsk,

to the abundant provisioning of which M. de Bassano's efforts had been principally directed, and compelled the three thousand troops under General Bronikowski to evacuate it; thus snatching from our grasp one of the principal points on the Wilna route, and one which contained provisions sufficient for a month's subsistence. After evacuating Minsk General Bronikowski effected a junction with General Dombrowski, whose excellent Polish division had been left in the rear for the purpose of guarding the Dnieper; and the united troops, numbering four or five thousand, advanced to Borisow upon the upper Berezina, for the purpose of defending the Borisow bridge, since, if this bridge on the Berezina were to fall into the hands of Tchitchakoff, the road would be entirely closed against the grand army, unless it were to ascend to the very sources of the Berezina, and even in this case it would be exposed to the danger of encountering Wittgenstein, whom the information which had now reached Napoleon pointed out to be a more formidable enemy than even Tchitchakoff.

Napoleon had expected that Marshals Oudinot and Victor, whom he supposed to be in command of forty thousand men, would have driven Wittgenstein and Steinghel before them beyond the Dwina, and then marched their forty thousand victorious troops upon the Berezina; as he had also expected that Schwarzenberg and Reynier would on their side have marched thither the forty thousand men whom they commanded, after having vanquished Tchitchakoff. In this case eighty thousand men would have been available for the infliction of a severe blow on the Russians before the end of the campaign. But all Napoleon's calculations with respect to affairs on the side of the Dwina, as on the side of the Dnieper, were defeated, for the two marshals, having attacked with the thirty-two thousand or thirty-three thousand men who alone were at their disposal, a strong position which had been taken up by Wittgenstein behind the Oula and near Smoliantzy, had lost two thousand men without succeeding in carrying it, and then, fearful of compromising a corps which was Napoleon's last resource, awaited at Czeréia at two marches on the right of the route pursued by Napoleon, some intimation of his definite intentions, which they had sent General Dode to learn.

Without criticising what they had already done, Napoleon sent General Dode to the two marshals with orders to Marshal Oudinot to proceed immediately by a transverse movement from right to left, from Czeréia to Borisow, for the purpose of supporting the Poles and aiding them to defend the bridge over the Berezina; and with orders to Marshal Victor to remain on the right, opposite Wittgenstein and Steinghel, for the purpose of holding them in check by inspiring them with the fear of a manœuvre of the grand



army against them, and thus affording it time to reach the Berezina. Should these instructions be followed, as it was to be presumed they would, Tchitchakoff having been driven from Borisow by Oudinot, and Wittgenstein held in check by Victor, the grand army would be able to reach the Berezina in time to pass it, rallying Victor and Oudinot, to retake Minsk and its magazines, to rally Schwarzenberg, and thus to find itself ninety thousand strong, in a position to overwhelm one or two of the three Russian armies, and thus to terminate a campaign which had been brilliant up to the entrance into Moscow, and calamitous since the departure from Malo-Jaroslawetz, but which was destined, perhaps, to become once more brilliant and even triumphant towards its conclusion.

On the 20th of November Napoleon advanced from Orscha to the château de Baronoui; proceeding from thence on the 21st to Kokanow, and marching from this place on the 22nd for Bobr. The weather although still very cold, had suddenly become less severe than it had been, but the change afforded no alleviation to the sufferings of the army, for the moisture which succeeded the snow and ice rendered the cold more penetrating, whilst it was almost impossible to drag the gun-carriages through the half frozen mud.

Having reached Toloczin at noon on the 22nd, Napoleon received there a despatch from Borisow, by which he learned that Generals Bronikowski and Dombrowski, after having defended with the utmost obstinacy the bridge which crossed the Berezina there, and lost between two thousand and three thousand men, had been obliged to retreat behind Borisow, and were then a march and a half in advance on the route followed by the main body of the French army, which was now only a few leagues from the hostile force which might cut off its retreat across the Berezina, and was deprived of the only bridge by which it could cross that river. To construct a new bridge would be almost impossible with the insignificant amount of materials possessed by the army for such a purpose, and, moreover, there could be little doubt that whilst the French were attempting to cross the Berezina they would be attacked on the left by Tchitchakoff, on the right by Wittgenstein, and in the rear by Kutusof.

On receiving the dispatch containing the information of this state of affairs, Napoleon descended from his horse, perused the dispatch with feelings of emotion of which he permitted no trace to become apparent, advanced a few steps towards a bivouac fire which had been lighted on the route, and, perceiving General Dode, who had returned from his mission to Marshals Oudinot and Victor, ordered him to approach, and as he came up said, gazing at him with a glance



of which the expression was unequalled, "*They are there*"—meaning that the Russians were at Borisow; and then entering a cottage and spreading out a map of Russia on its coarse table, proceeded to discuss with General Dode the method by which it would be possible to extricate the army from its perilous position. General Dode proposed the plan of ascending the course of the Berezina towards the point of its junction with the Oula, in the neighbourhood of Lepel, where it was very shallow and could be readily forded; and having effected a junction with Victor and Oudinot, re-entering Wilna by the Gloubokoé route. To this proposition Napoleon objected the length of the détour which separated the army from Wilna, the danger there was that the Russians would have preceded its arrival there, and the imminent peril of encountering Wittgenstein. But whilst General Dode was replying to these objections, Napoleon, paying no attention to the speaker, traced with his finger the course of the Berezina and the Dnieper, and as his eyes fell on the spot marked as Pultowa he started from the map, and pacing up and down exclaimed "Pultowa! Pultowa!" appearing to have forgotten the presence of General Dode, who watched in silence this singular scene, and contemplated with mingled grief and surprise the new Charles XII., who, both a hundred times greater and a hundred times more unfortunate than the original one, now at length acknowledged his consciousness of his destiny. At this point of the interview Murat entered the cottage with Prince Eugene, Berthier and General Jomini, who having been governor of the province during the campaign, had studied its localities, and was very capable, therefore, of giving advice on the present occasion. As soon as Napoleon perceived General Jomini he said to him "It is just, that when the fortunate become unfortunate their ill fortune should equal their good fortune." He then asked the General's advice, which was, that the army should attempt the passage of the Berezina a little above Borisow, and from thence make for the Smorzonja route, which was the shortest to Wilna and the least devastated. The subsequent course of events showed that this was very sensible advice; but Napoleon, without disputing or even appearing to have heard it, suddenly burst forth into a torrent of complaints, and walking to and fro and speaking with extraordinary animation, declared that if the hearts of those around him were not smitten by such weak despondency he would ascend towards the upper Berezina, attack Wittgenstein's army, compel it to yield, and re-enter Europe with a Russian army captive in his train. To this proposition General Jomini simply replied that the execution of such a manœuvre

might be possible with a thoroughly effective and well provisioned army, but certainly not with one thoroughly exhausted by long privations.

In the midst, however, of the observations made by those around him, and of the brilliant dreams in which his soul indulged, Napoleon determined upon the course which he would pursue with the utmost tact and discernment; resolving to advance directly upon the Berezina, to send Oudinot to Borisow to snatch this position from the enemy's grasp, and, should this be impossible, to seek a passage in the environs. He sent suitable instructions to Oudinot who had arrived on the right of the French army, and proceeded to Bobr for the purpose of personally superintending the execution of his proposed manœuvre.

And now fortune, as though weary of overwhelming him with so many evils, appeared to have resolved to save him by a miracle from the last humiliations. As has been already stated, Marshal St. Cyr, after the evacuation of Polotsk, had detached from the 2nd corps General Wrède, for the purpose of opposing Steinghel, and this Bavarian General permitted himself to become isolated from the 2nd corps, and remained in the environs of Gloubokoé, retaining with his other troops the light cavalry division of General Corbineau, composed of the 7th and 20th chasseurs, and the 8th lancers. As the 2nd corps, however, soon had reason to regret the absence of this division, it had set out, in accordance with directions which had been sent to it from Gloubokoé, on the 16th of November, and having arrived close to Borisow, after encountering and successfully passing amidst the parties of troops which Admiral Tchitchakoff had thrown forward for the purpose of connecting his own army with that under Wittgenstein on the upper Berezina, it had found, as the Russians were already at Borisow, that the only course open to it was to traverse the Berezina, and to join the grand army, to which, enfeebled as it was in its cavalry arm, seven hundred cavalry would be an important addition. It had proceeded, therefore, along the right bank of the Berezina above Borisow, in search of a place at which it might be possible to cross to the other bank, and having found a point at which the water was unusually shallow, opposite the village Studianki, three leagues above Borisow, had reached the other bank, and, proceeding as speedily as possible to Bobr, had there found Marshal Oudinot crossing the Smolensk route on his way to Borisow. General Corbineau had made his report to his Marshal and then rejoined the 2nd corps to which he belonged, whilst almost at the same moment Marshal Oudinot, throwing himself suddenly upon Borisow, had surprised there and

surrounded Count Pahlen's advanced guard, taking five or six hundred prisoners and slaying or wounding an equal number ; and had then hastened towards the bridge, which the Russians, eager to fly and despairing of being able to defend it, had burned.

Although, however, the bridge across the Borisow had been thus destroyed, the unexpected discovery of a ford made by General Corbineau afforded a ray of hope, and Napoleon, after having received from General Corbineau in a personal interview, a minute account of its position, sent orders by the General to Oudinot to make immediate preparations for effecting the passage of the Berezina, by the Studianka ford, but at the same time enjoining the utmost secrecy, and the execution of such manœuvres below Borisow as might deceive Tchitchakoff, and divert his attention from the point at which the French army was about to attempt the passage.

General Corbineau, quitting Napoleon on the 23rd, lost no time in rejoining Marshal Oudinot, and the latter, proceeding on the following day, the 24th, to execute the orders he had received, took advantage of the night and the wood which bordered the Berezina, to send General Corbineau secretly with all the available pontonniers to commence the works which would be necessary to enable the army to cross the Berezina by the Studianka passage. In the meantime, Napoleon, having proceeded on the 24th to Lochnitza on the Borisow route, with the intention of reaching Borisow itself with the guard on the following day, for the purpose of inducing the Russians to believe that he intended to cross the Berezina below instead of above that town, had sent orders to Marshal Davoust, who, since the battle of Krasnoé, had again commanded the rear guard, to hasten his movements, that the passage of the Berezina might be effected, if at all, with the utmost possible expedition, and, especially, had despatched General Eblé with the pontonniers and their matériel to Studianka, to complete the construction of the bridges which the pontonniers of the 2nd corps had been only able to commence.

General Eblé set out on the evening of the 24th from Lochnitza towards Borisow, with his four hundred men, followed by the able General Chasseloup, who still possessed some of his sappers, although quite unfurnished with matériel, and marching throughout the whole night, reached Borisow at five o'clock on the morning of the 25th, and from thence, by a movement to the right, reached the bank of the Berezina at Studianka in the course of the afternoon, when General Eblé, addressing his troops, declared to them that the fate of



the army was in their hands, inspired them with his own noble sentiments, and obtained from them the promise of the most absolute devotion; a promise which bound them, although they had just marched during two days and two nights, and the cold had again become most intense, to remain in the water throughout the whole of the night and the following day, in the midst of enormous masses of ice, and exposed to the bullets of the enemy, without an hour of repose, and only taking time to snatch a morsel of the roughest food.

Napoleon, after having proceeded from Lochnitz to Borisow, and slept at the château de Storoi Borisow, galloped up to Studianka on the morning of the 26th with his lieutenants Murat, Berthier, Eugene, Coulaincourt, and Duroc, and watched the pontonniers fixing the bridges, without daring to urge to further exertions, men, who at the exhortations of their worthy General, were exerting to the utmost all their strength and intelligence. In the meantime, as it was a subject of the most anxious inquiry whether the French troops would have to encounter or not the Russian army at the moment when they were attempting the passage of the river, Marshal Oudinot's aide-de-camp, Jacqueminot, had with some difficulty crossed to the other bank, and seized on an inferior officer of the Russian army, from whom it was learned that Tchitchakoff with the bulk of his forces was before Borisow, fully deceived by the pretended intentions of the French below that town, and that he had only a detachment of light troops at Studianka.

Whilst the bridges were still in progress, Corbineau, with his cavalry brigade, taking behind them a certain number of voltigeurs, plunged into the Berezina, and having surmounted the many difficulties presented by the passage of the river, ascended the opposite bank, and took up a position in the wood on its borders; Napoleon at the same time posting on the left bank forty pieces of cannon which were to fire, if necessary, over the heads of our men at the risk of striking them, the state of affairs rendering such an inconvenience unavoidable.

Working in the midst of the freezing water, with the utmost ardour, and without even complaining of the terrible hardships they were undergoing, the pontonniers rendered practicable one of the two bridges they were constructing an hour after noon, and the divisions Legrand and Maison, and Doumerc's cuirassiers of the 2nd corps, and the remains of the division Dombrowski, amounting altogether to nine thousand men, immediately passed over it to the other bank, where they immediately engaged and put to flight some light infantry troops which General Tchaplitz, who commanded



Tchitchakoff's advanced guard, had moved upon this point; and established themselves in a position in which they would be able to cover the passage of our troops.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the second bridge was completed, and after the Guard had effected the passage, it was attempted to accomplish that of the artillery; but having been necessarily most hastily constructed, and with ill prepared materials, it twice gave way under the weight to which it was now exposed, and was not fully established until six o'clock on the following morning.

In the meantime, the bridge which had been first completed, and which was on the right, having been devoted solely to the passage of those on foot and the infantry, had never ceased to be practicable, and during the night of the 27th of November almost all the unarmed crowd of stragglers reached the opposite bank by its means. The attraction of some farms and a certain amount of provisions, however, had retained a portion on the left bank of the river, and about ten or fifteen thousand men, distributing themselves around bivouac fires, resolved not to leave the left bank that night for quarters which might be far less endurable, and thus, the bridge to the right being rendered useless, whilst that on the left was rendered impracticable by breaking down under the artillery, was lost (and it was a loss, which was very soon to be bitterly regretted) the night of the 27th.

On the morning of the 27th Napoleon traversed the bridges with his staff, and having taken up his quarters in a little village named Zawnicky, on the right bank, behind the corps of Marshal Oudinot, remained on horseback during the whole day for the purpose of superintending in person the passage of the various detachments which still remained on the left bank. During the course of the day the 4th corps (Prince Eugene's), the 3rd (Marshal Ney's), the 5th (Prince Poniatowski's), and the 8th (the Westphalian), accomplished the passage; the two former numbering about two thousand each, and the two latter about five or six hundred each. Towards the close of the day came up the 1st corps which, since the departure from Krasnoé, had resumed the position of rear guard, and was now the only corps which preserved any appearance of discipline.

The 9th corps, that of Marshal Victor, after having slowly fallen back before Wittgenstein, had finally made a decided retrograde movement, for the purpose of covering the grand army, and had posted itself between Borisow and Studianka in such a manner as to protect these two positions; and Napoleon, considering it a matter of extreme importance to deceive Tchitchakoff with respect to the point at which the

army was about to cross the Berezina, ordered Marshal Victor to leave at Borisow the French division Partouneaux, already reduced from twelve thousand men to four thousand, whilst he himself with the Polish division Gerard and the German division Dáendels, numbering altogether about nine thousand men, and seven or eight hundred cavalry, covered Studianka. At the same time, making every attempt to resist the enemy's attack, he directed Marshal Davoust, as soon as he should have effected the passage of the river, to advance on the Zembín route, which was also the Wilna route, to seize before they should be occupied by the Cossacks, the many important defiles which occurred along it.

The 27th was thus employed in crossing the Berezina, and preparing a desperate resistance; and on the same day a third accident occurred to the bridge on the left, which, although it was speedily repaired, caused considerable confusion amongst the number of waggons which were being hurried across it.

In the meantime, Tchitchakoff had been completely deceived with respect to the place at which we had determined to effect the passage of the Berezina; so completely, indeed, that when General Tchaplitz informed him of the movements of the French army at Studianka, he regarded them as mere pretended operations designed to deceive him with respect to Napoleon's real intentions. When, however, information of the actual passage of the army reached him, he was at length undeceived and determined to attack us violently on the right bank on the 28th of November in concert with the two other Russian armies posted on the left bank. The forces at his disposal were between thirty and thirty-two thousand, of whom ten or twelve thousand were cavalry, which would be by no means an advantageous arm on the species of ground on which the opposed forces would most probably meet.

In the meantime, Kutusof, having halted at Kopys on the Dnieper, to refresh and rally his troops which were much exhausted, had contented himself with sending beyond the Dnieper, Platow, Miloradovitch, and Yermoloff with an advanced guard of about ten thousand men, and these troops having arrived at Lochnitza, were ready to co-operate with Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein in the destruction of the French army. The position at this moment of Wittgenstein, who had followed Victor's corps together with Steinghel, was in the rear of Victor, between Borisow and Studianka, and as his troops numbered thirty thousand, there were thus about seventy two thousand Russian soldiers, without taking

into account the thirty thousand remaining in the rear with Kutusof, ready to attack the twelve or thirteen thousand under Victor, the nine thousand under Oudinot, and the seven or eight hundred of the Guard.

The terrible struggle commenced on the evening of the 27th. The unfortunate French division Partouneaux (the best of Victor's three), had to remain in front of Borisow during the whole of the 27th, in order to detain there and deceive Admiral Tchitchakoff. In this position it was separated from its corps by three leagues of wood and marsh, and was cut off, as was to be expected, from the other divisions of Victor's corps, employed in covering Studianka, by Miloradovitch's advanced guard, effecting on the Orscha route its junction with Wittgenstein and Steinghel. It was on the evening of the 27th that Partouneaux first perceived the perilous nature of his position, and found himself suddenly attacked on the Orscha route, and on the other side by Tchitchakoff's troops which were attempting to cross the Berezina on the wrecks of the Borisow bridge; the embarrassment of his position being immensely increased by the presence of many thousands of stragglers, who had accumulated about his troops with their baggage, believing that their passage across the Berezina was really to be effected below Borisow, and who, seeking refuge in their despair, with cries of anguish, amidst Partouneaux's troops, impeded their movements, and increased the desolation of the scene. Partouneaux, resolved, nevertheless, in spite of these adverse circumstances, to extricate himself from his perilous position, and attempted to cross the labyrinth of wood and marsh which separated him from Studianka, but he had only a force of four thousand men with which to contend with forty thousand, and after a most heroic contest he surrendered, or rather was taken prisoner, with two thousand men who alone remained to him. A battalion of three hundred men alone succeeded under shadow of the darkness in ascending the Berezina and gaining Studianka; whilst the stragglers, unable to escape, fell before the Cossack lances.

On the morning of the 28th the conflict commenced on the two banks of the Berezina; on the right bank with those of our troops which had effected the passage, and on the left bank with those who covered it. The enemy's fire became terribly vehement, and on each bank thousands fell, to die. Nevertheless, although the Russian Generals had concerted amongst themselves measures calculated to drive the French troops on each bank of the Berezina, into its waters, they were, fortunately, so intimidated by the presence of Napoleon and the grand army, that, though possessed of the



advantage both in numbers and position, they acted with extreme reserve, and did not display that vigour which must have completed our ruin.

Marshal Oudinot was engaged from an early hour of the morning with the troops of Tchaplitz and Pahlen, which were supported by the remainder of Tchitchakoff's forces, and a detachment of Yermoloff's; and his Generals, Maison, Legrand, and Dombrowski, by the exercise of as much skill as valour, had just succeeded in driving back Tchaplitz and Pahlen upon the bulk of Tchitchakoff's corps, when Oudinot himself was wounded and carried off the field. As General Legrand was also wounded, Napoleon sent Ney to replace Oudinot, and Ney immediately hastened up with the wreck of his corps, followed by the division Claparède, and proceeded to support the divisions Maison and Legrand, and to aid them to drive back the head of Tchitchakoff's troops upon their corps de bataille. He ordered Doumerc to hold himself in readiness to charge towards the right, and arranged his infantry columns in such a manner as to be able to charge with them either on the centre or on the left, at the same time directing a violent cannonade against masses of Russian troops which were posted in the thickest part of the wood. Doumerc, impatient for action, perceiving on his right six or seven thousand veteran Russian infantry supported by a line of cavalry, charged them with the 7th cuirassiers, under Colonel Dubois, and having thus broken the Russian square, hastened up with the 14th cuirassiers to prevent the enemy's line from re-forming, whilst the fourth held the enemy's cavalry in check on the left, and the light cavalry held it in check on the right. The conclusion of this portion of the battle left us in possession of about two thousand prisoners, and had cost the enemy a further loss of one thousand in killed and wounded. In the meantime Ney had advanced his infantry against the enemy's line, and compelling the Russians to retreat into the thickest portion of the wood, continued the pursuit to the extremity of the Stakow forest, half way from Brill to Borisow, and there paused, concluding with a cannonade a battle which had resulted in a complete victory for us, and had cost the enemy three thousand in killed and wounded, and as many prisoners.

In the meantime Marshal Victor on the left bank of the Berezhina, had to maintain his ground against forty thousand Russian troops, with nine or ten thousand soldiers whose movements were embarrassed by the presence of ten or twelve thousand stragglers. He had taken up a position, which was fortunately well calculated for defensive operations, on the side of a ravine which ended in the Berezhina,



and had posted there the Polish division Girard, together with the German division and the Dutch division de Berg. By his right he covered Studianka and protected the bridges, and he was supported on his left by a wood which he had not sufficient forces to occupy, but in front of which he had posted the eight hundred cavalry which were still at his disposal under the command of General Fournier; whilst with twelve pieces of cannon, he had established a dominant and murderous fire against the Russian troops, and thus held them in check.

At daybreak the Russian attack, which was directed by General Diebitch, the chief of Wittgenstein's staff, became very vehement, and after a vigorous cannonade, numerous squadrons of the enemy's cavalry attacked the French left, composed of Fournier's cavalry, but were repelled by the latter and even driven back beyond the ravine. At the same time the Russian infantry chasseurs, attacking our right, had descended into the ravine, and posting themselves in the brushwood, had afforded General Diebitch the opportunity of establishing there a strong battery, the fire of which was directed upon the bridges, towards which a mass of stragglers and baggage was proceeding in terrified haste.

Marshal Victor, fearing for the safety of this portion of his line, since the defence of the bridges was his chief duty, threw several columns of infantry against the Russian battaries, whilst the imperial Guard, on the opposite bank of the Berezina, having perceived the peril, posted some pieces of cannon in such a manner as to answer those of the enemy. And thus for some hours was exchanged a torrent of projectiles between the two banks of the river, and close to the bridges, which received a portion of them, whilst a large number fell amidst the terrified crowd which was hastening with almost mad eagerness to cross to the other bank, and which now presented in its agony, confusion, and despair, a spectacle which was in itself a fearful condemnation of this mad expedition.

When Victor, who displayed throughout the day the most devoted courage, perceived that there was some danger that his right would be broken, and imminent peril of a frightful catastrophe thus taking place towards the bridges, he resolved to make a furious attack towards the enemy's centre, and throwing a column of infantry across the ravine, assailed and drove back the Russian line at the same moment that General Fournier, executing a final charge with his cavalry, thus supported the movement and rendered it decisive.

The Russian artillery having been thus driven back, ceased to aggravate the disorder at the bridge by its fire; but Gen-

eral Diebitch, unwilling to consider himself vanquished, re-formed his line, which was three times more numerous than ours, and returning to the charge, drove the French troops once more beyond the ravine, when the approach of night separated the exhausted combatants, and the contest ended, leaving Fournier with scarcely three hundred of his seven or eight hundred horse, and Marshal Victor with scarcely five thousand of his eight or nine thousand infantry, the Russians having lost in the double contest waged on each side of the Berezina ten or eleven thousand men, without taking into account the three thousand men who had fallen into the hands of General Doumerc. But the Russian wounded were saved, whilst ours were necessarily abandoned, together with the stragglers, whom it was now useless to hope to be able to transport across the river in time to avoid the enemy.

The night brought with it a certain degree of calm in the place of the carnage and confusion which had marked the whole course of the day, and the French army could fairly indulge in the feeling of having obtained a glorious triumph; but it was nevertheless necessary that it should on the following day not so much retreat as fly, and from nine o'clock in the evening, until Marshal Victor's troops crossed the Berezina, taking with them all their artillery and matériel, with the exception of two pieces of cannon. There still remained, however, several thousands of disbanded stragglers or fugitives on the left bank, who wished to defer their passage across the river until the morrow, and as Napoleon had ordered that the bridges should be destroyed at daybreak, General Eblé, and several other officers, proceeded to their bivouacs, to entreat them to cross the river immediately, and to declare to them that the bridges were about to be destroyed. But all his efforts were in vain.

At daybreak on the following day, the 29th of November, General Eblé received orders to destroy the bridges at seven o'clock, but being anxious to give every opportunity to the stragglers, who, convinced too late of their danger, now hastened to cross the river with the utmost eagerness, he delayed the execution of this order until nearly nine o'clock, when the Russians being almost upon them, he was compelled with a heavy heart to set fire to the heaps of inflammable materials which had been placed under the bridges to facilitate their destruction. Immediately torrents of smoke and flame enveloped the two bridges, and the unhappy wretches who were upon them precipitated themselves into the stream to avoid being carried down with them in their fall. From the midst of the crowd which had not yet effected the passage arose a cry of bitter despair, accompanied by tears and con-

vulsiye gestures, the wounded and the women stretching out their arms towards their companions, who were making a desperate effort to reach the opposite bank, either by the burning bridges, or through the stream itself, to avoid a captivity less endurable than death. The Cossacks now galloped up, and thrusting their lances into the midst of the crowd slew some of the unfortunate wretches of which it was composed, and then drove the others, numbering from six to eight thousand, men, women, and children, disbanded soldiers or fugitives, towards the Russian army.

The French army retreated overwhelmed with a deep feeling of affliction caused by this spectacle, and no one was more bitterly distressed at it than the generous and intrepid Eblé, to the exertions of whom and his gallant pontonniers the fifty and odd thousand individuals armed or unarmed, who had crossed the Berezina, owed both life and liberty.

Such was the immortal event at the passage of the Berezina, one of the most tragic to be found in history, and a fit completion of this terrible campaign.

It was now necessary that the army without a moment's loss of time should proceed by Zembin, Pletchenitz, Ilia, and Molodeczno, to rejoin the Wilna route; and on the 4th of December, the head of the army had reached Smorgoni, whilst the rear guard was at Molodeczno, where a violent and desperate encounter took place between it and a Russian force, consisting of Platow's cavalry and the division Tchaplitz, ending in the repulse of the latter, but leaving Ney's troops reduced to four or five hundred, and consequently insufficient for the service of the rear guard which was now entrusted to Marshal Victor, with the Bavarians under General Wrède.

Napoleon having arrived at Smorgoni considered that he had satisfied all the demands of honour in remaining with the army up to the point where the Caudine forks no longer threatened it, and resolved to return to Paris. M. Daru, indeed, to whom he communicated his intention by his own mouth, and M. de Bassano, to whom he sent information of it by letter, insisted strongly upon the necessity of his remaining with the army, but Napoleon disregarded their advice, being most strongly impressed by the sense of the danger he should incur, should he find himself with a few worn out troops incapable of any resistance at four hundred leagues distant from the French frontier, the Germans on his rear being very disposed to revolt. What would be the result, he asked himself, what would be the effect on the empire, should the Germans entertain the very evident idea, that by preventing his return to France they would at one blow destroy the fabric of his



power, and should they give effect to this idea, by closing the Rhine route against him and the wrecks of his army? Exaggerating this peril with that vivacity of perception which was one of the distinguishing qualities of his mind, Napoleon was impatient to quit his army now that the passage of the Berezina had been miraculously effected and the claims upon his Imperial honour no longer demanded his presence at the head of his troops. Fearing that as soon as his disasters became known, a thousand arms would be outstretched to bar his road, he was anxious to escape at once with Coullaincourt, Lobau, Duroc, and Lefebvre Desnouettes, traversing Poland and Germany secretly, and to reach the Tuileries unexpected even by his wife.

But although there were many reasons which urged the adoption of this course, there were many also of considerable weight which were of an opposite tendency. He was still at the head of twelve thousand armed troops, followed by forty thousand stragglers, who were quite capable, by the aid of a month or two of repose and proper resources, of being reconverted into disciplined troops, and, in the meantime, the twelve thousand troops who still preserved their arms would be joined between Molodeczno and Wilna by Wiede's six thousand Bavarians, at Wilna itself by Loison's nine thousand French troops, the two brigades of Poles and Germans under Franceschi and Coutard, numbering altogether about seven or eight thousand men, and, in addition to these organised corps, some squadrons and battalions *de marche* numbering about four thousand, and six thousand Lithuanians. The junction of these various corps with the grand army would form a force capable of offering a considerable degree of resistance to the enemy, and numbering forty-five thousand well armed and disciplined troops. At the same time there were, on the right, Schwarzenberg with twenty-five thousand Austrians, and Reynier with fifteen thousand French and Saxon troops; whilst Macdonald commanded on the left ten thousand Prussians, who would not dare to be untrue to the French army as long as it was true to itself, and six thousand Poles who would be proof against every hostile influence. In the rear the division Heudelet of Augereau's corps reached Königsberg fifteen thousand strong, whilst Augereau himself was in command of an equal number, together with Grenier's corps, which had passed the Alps, eighteen thousand strong. Augereau would be able to hold Berlin with thirty thousand men, Heudelet to fill up the intervening space with fifteen thousand, and Napoleon would have the power of assembling around Wilna one hundred thousand, a force equal to that which was at the disposal of the Russians.



Kutusof's troops numbered only fifty thousand, Wittgenstein's twenty thousand, and Tchitchakoff's about as many, whilst Sacken, after the disastrous conflicts he had had with Schwarzenberg and Reynier, had now no more than ten thousand. Moreover, should the French army gain a battle before Wilna, the influence of such success would be sufficient to attract the thirty or forty thousand stragglers into its ranks, and it would be sufficiently strong to hold the Russians in check, to await reinforcements from France, and to procure resources from Poland.

But the moral sentiment was wanting to Napoleon's mind which would have caused him to prefer the loss of a throne to the abandonment of an army which he had led to disaster. Had his life only been in danger Napoleon was a sufficiently good soldier to have remained without hesitation with an army which his own errors had compromised; but to be dethroned, and, which was far worse, to become a prisoner in the hands of the Germans was a prospect which he could not bear to contemplate, and he formed the resolution at Smorgoni to return immediately to France.

Confiding the chief authority in his absence to the King of Naples, Napoleon left with him Major General Berthier, hoping that the service would thus have a wise, laborious councillor, capable of restraining his impetuosity, and of supplying his want of knowledge of details. Unfortunately, the major-general was completely demoralised, and his health totally destroyed. He was anxious to set out with Napoleon, and the severest language was necessary to induce him to remain.

On the evening of the 6th of December, at Smorgoni, Napoleon assembled Murat, Eugene, Berthier, and his marshals, and communicated to them his intention. They were greatly astonished and considerably agitated by this declaration, but did not dare to offer any opposition to the resolutions of their master, whom, although vanquished, they still feared; moreover, both his arguments and manner, which was on this occasion extraordinarily bland and persuasive, had considerable weight with them. He declared that he would speedily rejoin them at the head of a formidable army, and recommended them in the meantime to support each other, and faithfully obey Murat. Having concluded his address he embraced his hearers, and throwing himself into a sledge, followed by M. de Coulaincourt, Marshal Duroc, Count Lobau, and General Lefebvre-Desnouettes, set out in the middle of the night, leaving his lieutenants acquiescent in, and almost persuaded of the wisdom of the step which he was taking, but at the same time overwhelmed with astonishment and almost with despair.

The greatest secrecy was to be observed until the morrow in order that news of his departure might not precede him on the road which he was about to traverse in the strictest incognito. Before his departure he had issued the twenty-ninth bulletin, which subsequently became so celebrated, in which for the first time in the course of the retreat, he acknowledged that portion of the disasters suffered by the French army which could not be positively denied, attributing them to the inclemency of the weather, and relieving the account of his reverses by a description of the glorious and immortal passage of the Berezina.

When the army became informed of Napoleon's departure it fell into a species of stupefaction, for with him had vanished its last hope, and it mechanically continued its march, anxious to reach Wilna, as a month before it had been anxious to reach Smolensk. Each successive day brought an increase of its sufferings. On its departure from Molodeczno the cold had become still more intense, and had descended to thirty degrees Reaumur. Almost all the horses were dead, and the men daily dropped on the roads by hundreds. The troops marched huddled together, careless of their ranks, steeped in the silence of stupefaction and the depths of despair, saying nothing, regarding nothing. Smitten by the intense cold those who were of feeble constitution lost in succession, sight, hearing and consciousness, and then fell without power of motion to die on the road, and be trampled on by the crowd of those who followed.

And whilst the troops thus perished of cold on their march, they also perished in their bivouacs through the unrestrained enjoyment of warmth; for too eagerly exposing their frozen limbs to the heat of the bivouac fires, many of them brought upon their feet, and hands, and even faces, fatal gangrene. Many also perished by being burned to death, through their own carelessness in farm-houses in which they passed the night.

At length this desolate crowd of beings, lean, exhausted, clothed in rags and wearing over their uniforms all varieties of strange costume brought from Moscow, arrived on the 9th of December at the gates of Wilna, and experienced on the occasion in hearts which appeared to have been deprived of all sensation one last feeling of pleasure. Wilna! Wilna! . . . It was a word which was identified in the minds of the troops with the ideas of repose, security, and abundance; and, in fact, although this city did not contain such resources as was generally supposed, it was capable of affording far more than what would supply the most pressing necessities of the army, and enable it to reach the Niemen

in good order. At the sight of the walls of the city, the crowd, forgetting that the largest gate would be but a very narrow entrance for such numbers, neglected to make the circuit of the walls in search of several gates, and mechanically following the head of the column, accumulated about the gate which was towards Smolensk in a state of terrible confusion similar to that which had arisen at the bridges across the Berezina. When at length the troops had entered the town, this scene of confusion was repeated in its streets, for as no attempt was made to supply the necessities of the soldiers or to preserve order amongst them, and the inhabitants, terrified at their wild appearance and clamorous cries, closed their shops and warehouses against them, even when they approached to purchase provisions, Wilna was speedily a sacked town.

The army reached Wilna during the 8th and 9th of December. Some days of repose were necessary to our exhausted soldiers, and it might easily have been procured for them, had proper orders been given to Schwarzenberg and General Reynier, the former of whom, having received a reinforcement of six thousand men, had reached Slonim whilst the latter had advanced towards Narew for the purpose of acting in concert with the division Durutte which came from Warsaw, and had inflicted a severe check upon the Russian General, Sacken, whom he encountered upon his road. Schwarzenberg receiving information of this event, had marched upon Sacken's flank, and assailing him in his turn had contributed to throw him back in disorder towards Volhynia. This success had cost the Russians some seven or eight thousand men, and had afforded Schwarzenberg and Reynier the security for their rear necessary before they could undertake any movement in advance, and had they been informed of the real state of affairs, Schwarzenberg, probably Reynier also, would certainly have marched upon Wilna, which he might have reached before the 10th of December. But Napoleon had set out without giving any orders to this effect, and Schwarzenberg and Reynier lingered between Slonim and Neswiz, uncertain what course to pursue, and unable to determine between the various contradictory reports which reached them from all sides. The result was, therefore, that Wilna was completely uncovered, and that there was no hope of making an effectual defence there against the three Russian corps which were advancing against it.

Each corps of the French army had fallen into complete dissolution under the influence of the cold and incessant fatigue; and at the gates of Wilna Victor had reached the conclusion of his duties as commander of the rear guard by



finding himself without a single soldier. The only troops remaining in their ranks were about three thousand in Loison's division, and about as many of the Imperial Guard. The generals, whether wounded or well, having no men to command, wandered hither and thither, and Murat, horrified at the responsibility which had fallen upon him, alarmed for the safety of his kingdom in the midst of the wide spread ruin which had begun to take place, and receiving but little support from Berthier, who was both sick and paralysed with fear, knew not what to do, or to order.

The enemy, however, left him no time for hesitation. On the evening of the 9th, Platow appeared with his Cossacks before the gates of Wilna, and aggravated to the highest possible pitch the disorder which prevailed within it. There was no longer any rear guard in existence, and General Loison, therefore, who alone had any troops at his disposal, hastened up with the nineteenth, and attempted to cover the town, whilst Ney and Lefebvre, running through the streets cried to arms, and endeavoured to collect some of the armed soldiers for the purpose of conducting them to the ramparts. By these means the Cossacks were checked, but only for a time, and each man from this moment only thought how he might effect his own flight. Murat, the hero of the plains of the Moskowa, Murat, the invulnerable Murat, who seemed proof against every weapon, was among the first to fly, and set off on the night of the 10th, declaring that he was going to Kowno, where it was to be attempted to assemble the army behind the Niemen. All who were capable of doing so fled in confusion, leaving to the enemy vast magazines of all kinds and some eighteen or twenty thousand wounded or exhausted men, many of the former of whom had been placed in the houses of the Polish Jews, and were thrown from the windows or murdered by these wretches, as soon as the French army was in retreat.

As the ground from the gates of Wilna for about the distance of a league was covered with ice it was difficult, and even impossible, for the horses to drag up the ascent the carts which bore the sick and wounded officers, the gun carriages, or the chests of treasure; which latter M. de Bassano, unwilling to manifest by their removal the danger of the situation, had left at Wilna as long as possible. At the bottom of the hill, therefore, there ensued a scene of the most terrible confusion, and after some hours of ineffectual exertion, it was found necessary to abandon the artillery, the trophies brought from Moscow, many of the sick and wounded, and to resign to the pillage of our own troops the greater portion of the



treasure. As the night ended the Cossacks hastened up to substitute their own pillage for that of the French, and to seize a booty such as had never before been offered to their avidity.

During the 10th, 11th, and 12th, the French troops traversed the twenty-six leagues which separated Wilna and Kowno; and in what destitution did they now re-pass the Niemen which six months ago they had crossed numbering four hundred thousand men and sixty thousand cavalry, twelve hundred pieces of cannon, and with incomparable *éclat*! All who had not been entirely deprived by the severity of the weather of all sense and feeling, could not avoid making this bitter comparison, and felt their eyes fill with tears as they considered it. As the Niemen was frozen over and the Cossacks had already crossed it at a gallop, there could be no hope of defending Kowno, and it only remained to depart, having first emptied, or to speak truly, pillaged the magazines which the activity of General Baste had filled with all the resources of Dantzic.

On the morning of the 12th of December Murat consulted with the Marshals, Prince Berthier and M. Darn, on the course which it would be proper to adopt. The only troops which remained in their ranks were about two thousand men in Loison's division, and about one thousand five hundred in the Guard, of whom only some five hundred were capable of bearing a musket; and Murat, exasperated into hatred of Napoleon by a state of things which imperilled the safety of the crowns possessed by the Bonaparte family, permitted himself to indulge in bitter complaint of Napoleon's ambition which had caused it. Davoust, indeed, having a thorough dislike of the King of Naples, silenced him by observing that if Napoleon was to find censors in the army, they should not be those of his lieutenants whom he had made kings, and that under existing circumstances, the object in view should be to discover some means of safety, and not to sanction by evil example the want of discipline amongst the troops.

The defence of Kowno and the conduct of the conclusion of the retreat, was unanimously entrusted to Marshal Ney, and for the purpose of affording the remains of the French army time to escape, he was to defend Kowno for forty-eight hours with the remains of the division Loison, and some troops of the German confederation, and then to fall back upon Königsberg, when he would be joined by Marshal Macdonald, who, on his side, retreated from Riga upon Tilsit. Marshal Ney demanded that in this last effort under the walls of Kowno he should be assisted by General Gérard, and this request was acceded to.

As soon as these plans had been arranged, the remains of the French army immediately departed for Königsberg, leaving Ney and Gérard at Kowno to attempt to hold in check the Cossacks, who appeared on the morning of the 13th by the Wilna route, in front of the bridge across the Niemen, upon which the German troops, after some hesitation, in spite of the remonstrances of Ney and Gérard, and although the Cossacks had been compelled to fall back by the fire of a detachment of the 29th, gradually disbanded, inducing by their example the soldiers of the 29th to do so likewise. Finding themselves therefore, on the evening of the 13th with only five or six hundred men and eight or ten pieces of cannon, Ney and Gérard resolved to depart during the night. But at the point of departure from Kowno, a hill arose as at the commencement of the route from Wilna, and, covered as it was with ice, had caused a terrible scene of confusion which was much increased by the fact that some Cossacks having crossed the Niemen on the ice and ascended the opposite side of the hill, threatened to cut off the route; and at this new danger the five or six hundred men who still followed Ney and Gérard dispersed, each now seeking his own safety, and the latter, with a few officers who still remained with them, turning to the right followed the course of the Niemen, and succeeded in gaining in safety the Gumbinnen route at Königsberg; thus performing for France a last service, the only one in their power, since it was at least something in the immensity of this disaster to save two men such as these.

From this moment not a trace of any corps of the army remained; the disbanded soldiers continuing their retreat across the frozen plains of Poland pursued by the Cossacks, who, after having advanced some leagues beyond the Niemen re-crossed it, since the Russian armies, triumphant but exhausted and much reduced in numbers, did not intend to advance to the opposite bank.

There were at Königsberg about ten thousand individuals in the hospitals, of whom some were wounded but the greater number sick. Of these latter some had their limbs frozen, whilst others were suffering from a horrible species of pestilence, named by the doctors *fièvre de congélation*, and terribly contagious. The heroic Larrey, worn out with fatigue and suffering, had caught this fever, and died of it. Heroism, of whatever species it may be, is the one consolation in the midst of great disasters, and this consolation for the disasters of the Russian campaign was granted to France in a measure which fully equalled those disasters. Amidst the crowd of those unhappy ones who expiated at Königsberg by their death, either the ambition of Napoleon or their own

intemperance were some whom France must ever regret, and amongst these were General Lariboisière and General Eblé; the former of whom, borne down by fatigue, which he supported with rare fortitude in spite of his age, but inconsolable for the loss of a son slain before his own eyes at the battle of the Moskowa, died of the contagion prevailing at Königsberg, whilst the latter, who had succeeded him in the chief command of the artillery, had been himself smitten by a mortal disease at the Berezina, and expired two days after the chief whom he succeeded.

Many attempts have been made to reckon up the losses suffered by France and her allies in this Russian expedition, and although such a calculation is as impossible as terrible, some idea of the truth may, nevertheless, be attained. The total force of the army intended to act from the Rhine to the Niemen consisted of six hundred and twelve thousand men (with the Austrians, six hundred and forty-eight thousand), and one hundred and fifty thousand horses. Of these five hundred and-thirty three thousand had passed the Niemen, of whom there remained, under the Prince Schwarzenberg and Reynier, about forty thousand Austrians and Saxons, fifteen thousand Prussians and Poles under Marshal Macdonald, and some isolated troops, numbering about thirty or forty thousand. Of the remaining four hundred and thirty eight thousand, about one hundred thousand had fallen into the hands of the Russians: and according to this calculation, therefore, about three hundred and forty thousand would have perished; but this happily was not the case, for a certain number of men who had deserted their ranks at the commencement of the campaign, had gradually rejoined their country across Poland and Germany. Nevertheless, it can be no exaggeration to say, that in the course of the campaign about three hundred thousand men fell beneath the enemy's fire and the severities of cold and want.

What can we say of the expedition which caused this terrible loss? What judgment pass upon it which has not already been passed by the general good sense of the world?

It was an enterprise which under no circumstances, or under scarcely any, could have possibly succeeded; the most perfect system of execution could not have corrected its essential fault, and the errors which were committed, and which for the most part were natural results of its inherent principle, rendered its success entirely impracticable.

It was not an enterprise which political causes compelled Napoleon to execute, for by employing all his resources in carrying on the war in Spain, he might have solved the Euro-



pean question, and by sacrificing some of his territorial acquisitions, which were more burdensome than useful, might have doubtless obtained a general peace. But even supposing this to be an error, and that it was inevitable that Russia should enter into an alliance with England and make war with France, to invade Russia instead of awaiting her attack upon the Vistula was one of the greatest political faults recorded in history, and was the fruit of that impetuous element of Napoleon's character which rendered him at once both impatient and rash. Had Europe, indeed, been united for the purpose of securing its independence, into a league against this vast empire, it might by attacking it by sea, or even by advancing against it methodically by land, have succeeded, since it would have had no reason to fear an attack on its rear, in obtaining a victory over her. But for Napoleon to march upon Moscow across Europe, secretly conspiring against him, and thus left full of hatred in his rear, was a proceeding of the rashest temerity; whilst, by awaiting Russia in Poland or Germany, he might have vanquished Russia and Germany by the same blow, had the latter constituted itself the ally of the former.

But if this enterprise was unreasonable in its very principle it was still more so considering the state of Napoleon's military resources in 1812. The greater number of the veterans of Austerlitz and Friedland were dead or were dying in Spain; and although some of them remained in Davoust's corps, and some old divisions of Ney, Oudinot, and Eugene, these corps were unfortunately immoderately swelled with young and refractory conscripts, and mingled, moreover, with allies who hated us, and who, although the sense of honour constrained them to fight well on the actual battle field, deserted on the first opportunity. It would have been better to have had three hundred thousand soldiers, such as were those of Marshal Davoust, than the six hundred thousand which were actually collected, for the difficulty of providing their subsistence would have been only one half, and being fed they would have remained in their ranks. In 1807, with excellent troops he had failed to reach the Niemen, and to attempt in 1812 to advance twice as far with troops only half as efficient, was to ensure some terrible disaster. At this period, indeed, the difficulties attending such an expedition were as great as possible, whilst the means for executing it were almost entirely wanting, for after having aroused against himself the rage of the Spaniards, who consumed many of our best troops, to advance an immense distance through enraged Germany for the purpose of provoking the frenzied enmity of the Russians, and then too, with an



army composed of troops in a very imperfect state of discipline, and consisting to a great extent of foreigners secretly hostile, was almost certain to invoke the most horrible of catastrophes.

The fault of this enterprise was so thoroughly essential to its very nature, that to enquire into the errors which were committed in its execution would be almost entirely useless, had not these errors themselves been the inevitable consequences of this principal fault.

Thus it is true that Napoleon, entering Russia on the 24th of June, lost eighteen days at Wilna; that when he advanced Davoust against Bagration he failed to provide him with sufficient forces, from his desire to reserve with himself a crushing force with which he might at once overwhelm Barclay de Tolly; that he lost twelve days at Witebsk; that when he set out from Witebsk for the purpose of turning the two Russian armies assembled at Smolensk, he wrongly, perhaps, hesitated to ascend the Dnieper as far as Smolensk, by which course, probably, he might have obtained the desired result; that instead of stopping at Smolensk he permitted himself to be led on by the desire of obtaining some brilliant result, in pursuit of the Russian army into those depths in which his own was to perish; that at the great battle of Moskowa, his hesitation to send his Guard into action was probably the cause which prevented the complete destruction of the Russian army; that when he found it necessary to evacuate Moscow, and had devised a vast and skilful combination for the purpose of returning upon the Dwina by Veliki-Luki he had not had sufficient firmness to overcome the opposition of his lieutenants; that his pride led him to remain at Moscow after he perceived that his position there was untenable; that he again wrongly yielded to the opinion of his lieutenants in resigning his plan of turning the Russian army at Malo-Jaroslavetz, for the purpose of penetrating into the rich Kalouga province; that when the retreat was necessary he neglected to conduct it in person; that at Krasnoé, by moving the army in detachments instead of en masse, he had lost there the whole of Marshal Ney's corps, almost all the troops which remained to Prince Eugene, a portion of the Guard, and of the troops under Davoust; and finally, that miraculously saved at the Berezina, he departed from the army, and thus neglected the opportunity of concentrating the remnants of his forces, and, with the force thus formed of striking the Russians a blow which would have compensated for his disasters by a triumph. All this is perfectly true, but they form but a feeble opinion with respect to the great catastrophe, who do not perceive

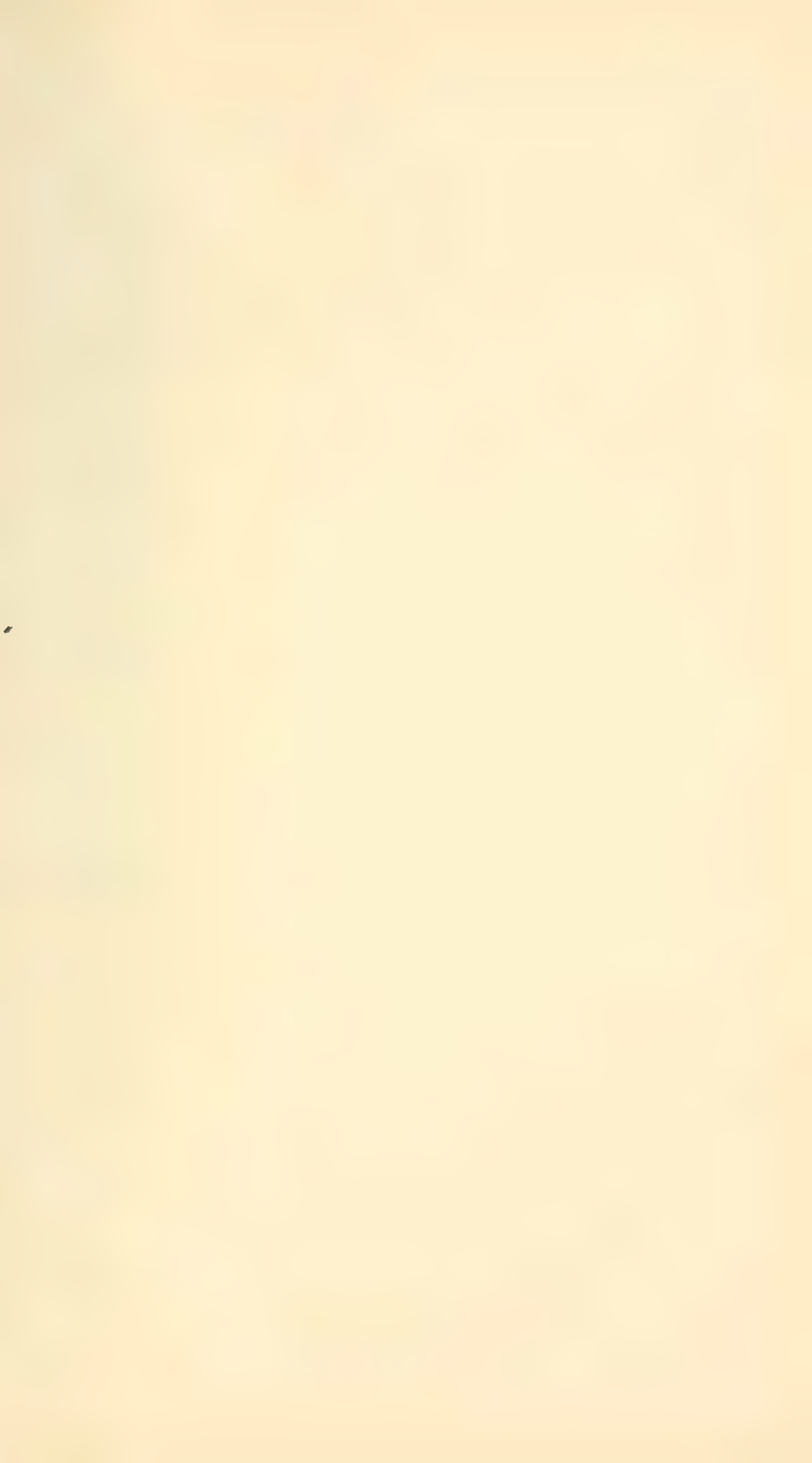
that the errors above recounted were not the result of any want of genius in Napoleon, but the natural consequences of the essential fault of the expedition itself. When he lost time at Wilna and Witebsk, awaiting the stragglers, his fault was not in waiting for them, but in having brought his troops so far; when he sent Davoust against Bagration with an insufficient force, he relied upon being able to concentrate troops in a manner which the nature of the country rendered impossible, and for this error the nature of the expedition was chiefly to blame as it also was for the error of his not stopping at Smolensk, for if it was dangerous to advance to Moscow, it would have been no less dangerous to winter in Lithuania with frozen rivers alone for a frontier, and with Europe in the rear, full of hatred against him and beginning to doubt his invincibility. If at the Moskowa he did not make use of his Guard, it was because he found it necessary to act cautiously in an enterprise of which he began to perceive the folly; if he remained too long at Moscow it was on account of the danger of exposing his embarrassments to Europe, always so ready to pass from a state of submission to one of revolt; if he paid too much deference to the opinions of his lieutenants with respect to his projected movements upon Veliki-Luki and Kalouga, it was because he had already demanded too much of them, and dared no longer demand anything of them but what was absolutely necessary; if in the retreat he displayed not that energy of which he had previously given so many proofs, it was because his energy was paralysed by the excessive consciousness of his errors. And, finally, if he abandoned the army at Smorgoni, it was because he perceived too clearly, and even in an exaggerated aspect, the consequences of the disasters which he had suffered, and which he considered could only be repaired at Paris. All this was not the result of any want of strength in Napoleon's mind or character, as he was speedily to prove on numerous battle-fields, but of the essential fault of this enterprise, or rather of that intemperate trait of Napoleon's character which hurried him into committing it.

At the same time let us not impute this disastrous catastrophe solely to earthly accidents, but also to moral causes; for to do this is demanded of us by our reverence for Providence, our sovereign judge, the supreme disposer of our fortunes in this world as in the next. To no fault of mere detail should we attribute this catastrophe, and not even to the fault of entering upon the Russian expedition at all, but to the far greater fault of having attempted to control the affairs of the world in a manner contrary to the rights and affections of its peoples, and without regard either for the

sentiments of those whom it was necessary to vanquish, or for the lives of those by whose aid this conquest would have to be effected—to the intemperance, in short, of genius blinded by a spirit of ambition. It is neither truthful nor useful to depreciate Napoleon, for to do so is simply to depreciate human nature and human wisdom; but both truth and wisdom demand that he should be rightly judged and displayed in his true light to the universe, together with the real causes of his errors, that nations, monarchs, and warriors, may perceive by a notable example the consequences which result when genius bursts the bonds of self-restraint, and permits itself to be carried away by the instigations of unlimited power. We need not wish to draw any other lesson from this terrible catastrophe. Still must be attributed to him who fell into this disastrous blindness, that greatness which adds to the greatness of the lesson, and which at least affords to its victims the recompense of Glory.

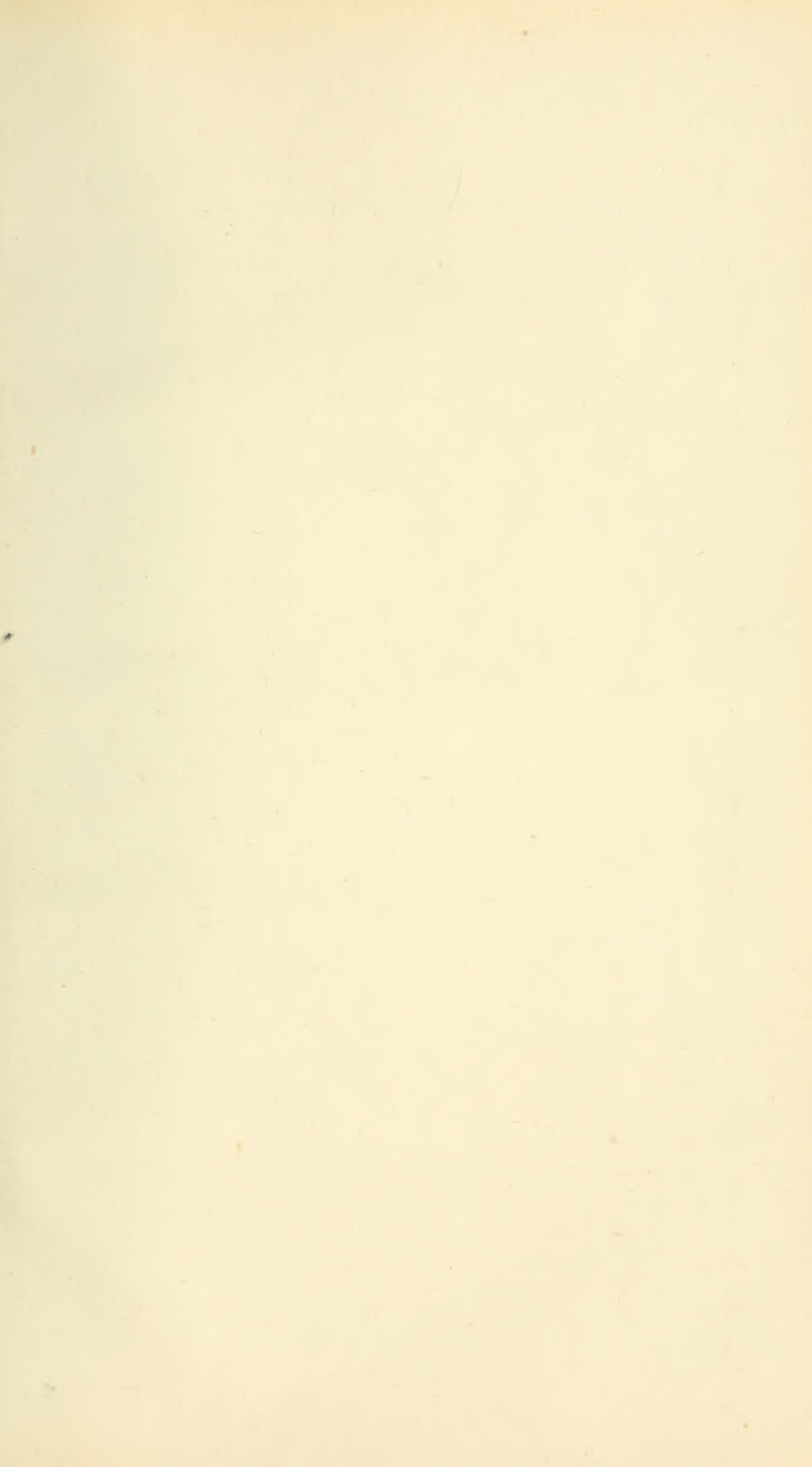
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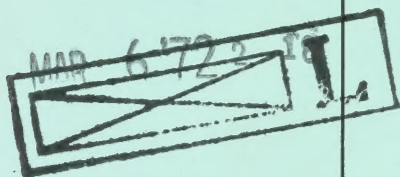




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